THE GREAT REVOLUTION OF 1905;

OR,

The Story of the Phalany.

With an Introductory Account of Civilisation in Great Britain at the close of the Nineteenth Century.

BY

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LONDON:
ROBERT FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.
1893.

PREFACE.

THE reader who may take up or set down this book under the impression that it is intended to describe a Utopia is invited to dismiss the idea from his mind with all convenient despatch.

He will be equally mistaken if he credits the writer with any intention or desire to pose as a prophet, whether of good or of evil.

He is further assured that he is perfectly welcome, if he chooses, to pronounce the industrial and social changes suggested in the following pages to be impracticable, mischievous, wicked, or idiotic—as his excellent judgment may dictate.

But it is desired that he shall seriously consider whether he or any one else will be able to prevent the workers of this nation, first, from awaking to the consciousness of their unlimited electoral power, and, second, from using that power to try either the particular experiment herein sketched forth, or some other one infinitely more objectionable.

From this point of view it may, perhaps, occur to him that when an irresistible evolutionary tendency is in progress amongst a community, it is easier, safer and wiser to recognise rather than to ignore it, to accept rather than to oppose it, to aid, guide and educate it rather than to stand aside and leave it to work its way to ultimate success through needless mistakes, failures and, perhaps, disasters.

If the writer may be permitted to offer a little metaphor to the consideration of those who propose to exhibit their sagacity under the conditions of modern life by leaving things alone, he would remind them that neither nations nor societies can go back upon the stream of time; that merely to float is to be helpless; and that to get steerage-way ahead, a craft must go *faster than the current.*

DEDICATION.

A man was once confined for fifteen years in a loathsome dungeon. At last a happy thought struck him—he opened the window and got out (ARTEMUS WARD).

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IN THE HOPE

THAT AN INSPIRATION SIMILAR TO THAT RECORDED ABOVE

MAY ONE DAY VISIT THE 35,000,000 SLAVES

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THEM BY

THE AUTHOR.

THE GREAT REVOLUTION OF 1905.

INTRODUCTION.

"England is the Paradise of the Rich, the Purgatory of the Wise, and the Hell of the Poor."—THEODORE PARKER.

THE lapse of nearly a generation since modern society, under the auspices of the British Commonwealth, entered upon what may perhaps prove to be its ultimate phase, has rendered it possible to take a more general view of the various aspects of the great evolutionary change in question than an earlier date would have permitted. On the other hand the year 1930 finds the people of Great Britain living under conditions, both socially and politically, so widely different from those which anteceded the Revolution of 1905, that the writer who proposes to give even the most cursory outline of the events of that remarkable episode in the world's history may expect to experience a difficulty in enabling the younger reader of to-day to realise, with anything like adequateness, the phases of the social organism which led naturally and of necessity to the inauguration of **State Industrialism** in this country and subsequently in the American Republic and amongst the leading European nations.

A few words may therefore be devoted to the student's assistance in this respect, before proceeding to the narrative portion of our sketch, and we invite his attention to the following details of Civilisation in Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century.*

* The reader who may have had occasion to become fully acquainted with the social evils of the late régime is invited to pass on to THE STORY OF THE PHALANX.

I.

Our country at the period referred to represented with accuracy that absolute worst of things which is the proverbial herald of mending. It is certain that no social state in the history of the world ever presented greater abominations, and it is doubtful if such a magnitude of evil was ever previously approached. If great opportunities for success are to be held to aggravate the ignominy or guilt of failure, the failure which Great Britain exemplified three decades back was the monumental crime of the race.

The nation had enjoyed settled government (of a sort) for nearly a thousand years; every aspect of religious propaganda had had unlimited range of operation, and many of these had benefited by the stimulus of persecution; science, learning, art, and literature were within the reach of those concerned in the imperial and local administration of the State; our nationality was characterised, as it always had been, by energy, enterprise, perseverance, and a genial temperament; while a century of unparalleled invention and discovery had placed almost limitless mechanical resources in the hands of our artificers.

The outcome of all these advantages was a social organism pitiable, despicable, and disastrous beyond description.

At its head was an idle, useless, and mischievous aristocracy, based on the theft of the soil, and deriving fabulous wealth from the property it had stolen from the nation. Next came a manufacturing class incessantly at war with the workmen upon whose labour its very existence depended; allied with a commercial community from amongst large sections of which almost the name of honesty had passed away, and whose richest members represented nothing but plunder or colossal gambling.

Serving these classes, and doing all the really useful work in the country, was an immense horde of artisans, of whom a a large proportion (thanks to their masters) were ignorant, vicious, and brutal to an extent hardly paralleled in the old

world or the new ; together with an army of slaves of the desk and counter, who were doomed to interminable hours of exhausting, servile, and soulless labour, carried on under every species of discomfort and petty tyranny.

Below all these came a seething residuum of struggling, toiling, starving, and despairing wretches, fighting from childhood to age for the day's fragment of a meal, in an atmosphere of drunkenness and vice, obscenity and blasphemy, filth and stench unutterable ; with barely sufficient rags to cover their emaciated frames, and sheltered, if at all, like swine in an overcrowded sty.

The community was ruled by a clique of unknown and irresponsible despots, the permanent officials of the State Departments ; while the nominal government was in the hands of the two houses of Parliament, the members of which, representing "land" and "capital," divided themselves into two parties in order to contend for the spoils of office, while they agreed in and out of power in supporting the sacredness of "property" —*i.e.*, the monopoly of the means of production.

These evils had been open and palpable for several generations ; thousands had observed, regretted, and struggled with them. But till quite late in the century only a mere handful recognised that they were the absolutely necessary and inevitable results, down to their minutest details, of the phase of industrial evolution through which the community was passing, and of the system upon which society had come in consequence to be organised.

Logically, no one was to blame for the innumerable mischiefs of the social state or for his share in producing them—all of these resulted as a matter of course from the system in question, just as water runs down hill.

That system may be summed up in one word—**Profit.**

Profit-mongering was accompanied by two elements which completed the wreck of the social fabric—**Competition** and the use of **Currency.**

For the benefit of the student of to-day, to whom the terms Profit, Competition, and Currency are mere names, and not very intelligible ones, we will illustrate as briefly as possible the working of these three factors of the social organism at the close of the nineteenth century.

The Profit system meant in brief that, *through the soil of the nation having been appropriated by a clique*, the citizen was prevented from obtaining the means of supporting himself direct from nature. Being thus compelled to *sell his labour* in order to procure food, clothing, and shelter, he was placed absolutely at the mercy of accident as to whether he should live or starve. The accident was of a two-fold character. It consisted, first, of the chance of any buyer of labour being able or willing to sell the product of the worker's exertions *for more than it cost*; and, second, of the chance of the labour-seller succeeding or failing in encountering the labour-buyer. The first problem was called **the state of trade**, the second was known as **the margin of surplus labour.** The principal difference between this system of **exploitation** and its predecessors termed "serfdom" and "slavery," lay in the fact that nobody—least of all the "exploiter" (employer or labour-buyer)—was responsible for keeping the "exploitee" (employé or labour-seller) in working order, or even alive. This was obviously a conspicuous improvement in the eyes of the exploiter class, and was termed **industrial freedom and progress.**

Under the system of Profit-making it was the object of every man to extort as much money from other people by work, organisation, learning, ability, impudence, fraud, meanness, cruelty, or crime, as his capacity or circumstances permitted. If his capacity or circumstances enabled him to secure for himself alone the wealth that should properly have been shared by hundreds or thousands of his fellows, he was called a **capitalist.**

Capitalism meant that the conditions of the social organism (*i.e.*, the monopoly of the means of production) gave certain

persons the power to say to certain others, "If you will work half of every day for us gratuitously, we will enable you to work the other half day for yourself"—the alternative to acceptance of this proposal being starvation, and the option being called **freedom of contract.** In other words, the worker was compelled to accept for his labour about half the value of its product,* under the name of **wages.** The other half was called **profit,** and was multiplied by tens, hundreds, or thousands, according to the number of workers thus exploited by any one employer. Of this profit the employer spent what he chose upon himself, and used the balance to provide opportunities for exploiting additional workers. This was called **saving**; the extra plunder so obtained was described as **the result of abstinence and thrift,** and went by the name of **capital.** Capital was sometimes defined as **accumulated labour**—the wage-earner doing the labour and the wage-payer the accumulating.

When the plunder thus accumulated was not employed by the plunderer personally, but was handed over to be made the instrument of plunder by some one else, the latter paid over a portion of the resulting spoils to the former, under the name of **rent, interest,** or **dividends.** This transaction was called an **investment,** and the final object of all profit-making was by means of investments to become **independent**—*i.e.*, to live in idleness on the labour of other people.

This process of depriving the many of their due for the benefit of one—the alpha and omega of "business"—had amongst others the following very natural consequences:

In the first place the interests of the producer and of the consumer were rendered diametrically antagonistic. The object of the producer was to keep at its possible maximum the difference between the cost and the sale price of any article. The readiest means of effecting this was evidently to diminish the expense of production by employing the cheapest (*i.e.*, the

* "The employer paid the worker on an average £69 4s. 0d. in wages, and fleeced from him on an average the sum of £64 14s. 0d." (Gronlund, "Co-operative Commonwealth," 28.)

poorest) labour and materials, and by adulterating the latter as far as safety permitted. This system seems to have permeated the whole world of manufacture, and made the chief problem of many branches of production to lie in their possibilities of elaborate fraud.

Another feature was the steady moral degradation of all the classes, high or low, engaged in the ignoble occupations of defrauding or misleading the purchaser in every stage of production or supply, thus making the highest qualifications for an ideal man of business to consist in an infinite capacity for getting the better of his customers and a far-reaching completeness of suspicion which saw possible fraud in every transaction with him sought by others.

Scarcely less lowering to self-respect was the fawning servility exacted by the consumer from the final agent in distribution, the retail shopkeeper; and it would be difficult to give the present generation an adequate idea of the extent to which this lamentable feature of the retail trade operated to generate the meanest snobbery on the part of the buyer, and the most humiliating subservience on the part of the trader and his employés. A certain degree of insolence, more or less unconscious, was so frequently the attitude adopted by the citizen in front of the counter to the citizen behind it (intensified, as usual, in the case of women towards women) that it had become part of the system, to be accepted with very much the same resignation as the foul air, fatigue, and interminably long hours which broke the health and spirit of the immense army of shop-slaves, and deprived them of almost all opportunities of either culture or recreation. It will be understood that the chief sinners in this exhibition of combined arrogance and meanness were the middle and upper classes, and no more striking proof need be adduced of the results of a radically false system in thus neutralising what might have been expected to be the effect of a so-called "polite education."

A still more pitiable result of profit-mongering was the intellectual poverty of a community giving its sole attention, from

youth to old age, to the single occupation of selling a thing for more than it cost, and assigning all its material and social rewards to those most successful in accomplishing this essentially commonplace feat. It is evident that no fault can be found with those unavoidably compelled by hard necessity to devote their whole minds, during the greater part of their lives, to details of the most sordid and unlovely description; but the effects produced by this degrading absorption of faculty on the the intellect and temperament can scarcely be over-estimated, and have even yet only partially passed away. The intensity of devotion to mere money-making through successive generations, which more than justified the description of Great Britain as a nation of shopkeepers, has left its traces in the difficulty with which even now the mass of our younger compatriots are educated up to the reliance on intellectual resources which was the heritage or acquirement of the happy few in our recent Dark Age. So profound, indeed, was the conviction under the old system that "getting on" demanded the exclusive devotion of all the faculties of the individual thereto, that down to the end of the last century many an employé indulged his possible natural bent for art, music, literature, or science in his infinitesimal leisure with fear and trembling; and kept his hobby severely concealed from an employer who was otherwise pretty certain to denounce it contemptuously or angrily as "unfitting him for his duties," and "unworthy of a business man."

II.

Probably the most detestable, if not the most serious and widely-spread, evil resulting from the profit system was the open sale of religion and justice for money, as organised by the Churches and the profession of the Law. The efficiency of these agencies in elevating hypocrisy and lying into sciences has probably never been surpassed in any age or country; although, as far as the so-called "religious bodies" were concerned, their demoralising tendencies were, from various cir-

cumstances, not so conspicuous as might have been expected. In the case of the Established Church, it is probable that its absorption in its three principal functions of buttress of the property interest, Tory political caucus, and provider of Sunday lounges for middle-class gentility, did a good deal to neutralise the evils which might have resulted from the more mercenary features of its organisation. Some of these (such as the arrangements for patronage of benefices, the sale of the "cure of souls" as a commercial speculation, the facile assumption of what were called—quite seriously—"holy orders," in order to step into family livings, &c.) would have rendered anything like sincerity in the Establishment an unknown quantity, had any high ethical status been accorded to it by public opinion. Fortunately, or otherwise, this was so far from being the case, that the chief subject for complaint amongst contemporary critics was the extreme difficulty and slowness with which the Church could be dragged forward by the laity and the press into even partial harmony with the higher *morale* and purer social aims which characterised the best non-sectarian thought of the period. It resulted from this, that little or nothing being expected from the Church as an evangelising or reforming agency, there was happily very little cant amongst its clergy and a conspicuous absence of hypocrisy amongst its nominal members. On the other hand, the cant and hypocrisy which saturated so large a section of the world of "professed" Nonconformity, lay and clerical, was characterised by such extreme crudity and clumsiness, and was applied with such coarse openness to every phase of trade, speculation and general swindling, that the very transparency of the whole thing prevented any more serious mischief resulting than the envy and admiration occasionally aroused in commercial circles by the successful brigandage of professional saints.*

* As in the case of the "Liberator Society" (1893), and its pious manager, Mr. J. S. Balfour.

But however harmless might have been the prevalence of mercenary humbug in the so-called "religious world," the sale of justice under the auspices of the legal profession was an evil of the first magnitude.

The danger to the community arising from the existence of a class trained to make its profit by defeating the criminal law, by enabling malefactors to retain the fruits of their crimes or to escape the legal consequences of them, and by systematically encouraging, the brutal offences against the person then so common amongst the lower orders, was one constantly on the increase until the Revolution, by abolishing both Profit and Currency, disposed at one stroke of nineteen-twentieths of the offences at common law.

At the time of which we write the lawyers had practically brought to completion the code of civil legislation. This was a body of laws which apparently had for their object the multiplying of occasions for dispute in trade and business, the obscuring of plain points of equity, the invention of excuses for appeal from court to court, of methods of delaying trial, of adding to the expenses of suits by vexatious and frivolous procedure, or falsifying and invalidating evidence, and of enabling all branches of the legal profession to produce and profit by perjured and forged testimony without incurring thereby any inconvenient personal liability.*

In civil suits the exploitation of the law received its appropriate verdict in the common adage, "Never go to law unless you are in the wrong." Inasmuch as civil grievances and injuries were of necessity almost invariably suffered by the poorer at the hands of the richer members of the community, the post of solicitor or counsel for the wrong-doer was the avowed or

* This last phase of legal practice was, down to about 1888-9, considered to belong more properly to the exercise of the solicitor's functions than that of the barrister or counsel, the latter, by a quaint fiction, being supposed to be quite satisfied that the evidence and witnesses furnished by his instructing solicitor were unimpeachable; but a celebrated political trial in the above years gave opportunity for the final abandonment of the distinction in question, through the example set by a distinguished law officer of the Crown, whose action was endorsed with enthusiasm by the bulk of his professional brethren.

unavowed object of every lawyer's ambition. Thus it became a matter of tradition that the aggrieved party would probably lose his cause through the indifference and neglect of his legal adviser. The defendant, on the other hand, being practically always the wealthier party, was served only too well. It was palpable that the fraudulent banker, director, sharebroker, manufacturer, merchant, or whichever class of thief might be in question, had, in addition to his own means, the property of others of which he had defrauded them—whereas the despoiled had at all events less than his own share, probably nothing at all. It therefore was an institution of the system that by sharing the plunder (under the name of retainers, refreshers, fees, costs, &c.) the trading thief was to be protected at all hazards and by every device of the complicated machine created by statute and the rules of the courts.

On the whole this arrangement seems to have worked with much smoothness, and few plaintiffs who had just claims ever got a favourable verdict, or at all events benefited by the results of one, because the indirect expenses and costs swallowed up any damages they might by accident be accorded. If a rightful claimant happened to be possessed of a little means, it was occasionally arranged for his opponent to be defeated at the outset, and then by appealing to successive courts to exhaust his resources to the last farthing—a process which was found to extract more from the victim than a verdict against him in the first instance, and to have the advantage of giving the courts an air of impartiality.

It is, as a matter of fact, difficult to understand the operation of law in the last century unless we assume the whole judicial machinery of the age to have been based upon the theory, that inasmuch as the occasion for law arose almost entirely from the proceedings of scoundrels, so the only utility of honest men from a legal point of view lay in their furnishing subjects for plunder. It would thus be the lawyers' concern to see that scoundrelism flourished, not that it decayed; that rogues waxed fat rather than lean; that they operated with safety

rather than with risk ; that in effect they should be protected at all hazards. Lawyers had precisely the same sympathy with honesty that brewers had with temperance, army contractors with peace, plumbers with a mild winter, or undertakers with a low death-rate—whence it followed that a considerable section of the profession existed more or less obviously for the chief purpose of encouraging, extending, and intensifying every conceivable kind of villany. And unfortunately matters did not rest with the systematic protection of scoundrels, ruffians and murderers. Under the infamously abused formula of "duty towards the client," many lawyers were at least equally ready to put the machinery they controlled into operation against people guilty of no crimes at all ; and irrespective of the infinite oppression which could so readily be exercised in connection with unjust monetary claims and extortions, it is to be feared that instances were not wanting of counsel who were quite prepared to convict a prisoner of an offence he had obviously never committed, and to secure a verdict which would condemn a man to utter ruin or a convict's cell on evidence they strongly suspected to be forged or perjured.

So little can this attitude of mind be appreciated at the present day, that such a state of things may perhaps be thought to involve a certain reflection on the moral character of members of the bench and bar. But this would be an entire misapprehension of the real facts of the case. In enabling a villain to escape from justice, in bringing honest people to beggary, or in branding an obviously innocent man as a felon, solicitors and counsel were as profoundly convinced of the ethical purity of their motives, as were the medical faculty of Great Britain from 1850 to 1870 in vilifying and persecuting Drs. Elliotson, Esdaile, Wilson, Ashburner, and other advocates of curative mesmerism ; or the bench of Bishops in supporting slavery during the whole of the last century ; or our Elizabethan admirals in promoting piracy ; or Calvin and Torquemada in burning alive persons whose religious opinions annoyed them.

As a matter of fact, all these professional idiosyncracies fell under one simple explanation, viz., that as long as the custom and etiquette of certain avocations (in other words, the contemporary system) permitted of certain devilries in connection therewith, the said devilries invariably became matter of actual duty and conscience with those able and willing to perpetrate them, and the perpetrators absolutely lost the power of seeing that they were devilries. So far from the legal gentlemen of whom we have spoken being worse than the rest of the world, they were in a general way very worthy and amiable persons, and, outside their professional life, were just as fair, honest, and truthful as other folks. Indeed, no stronger proof could be adduced of the tendency of a vicious system, merely as a system, to pervert and degrade human conduct (if not human nature), than the circumstance that when a practising counsel (whom the etiquette of his profession invited to commit almost any moral iniquity for an adequate fee) became a judge, the same etiquette insisted that he should be inaccessible to pecuniary temptation; and the remarkable part of the thing was that the etiquette in the latter case expressed a positive and universal fact. A judge might be feeble-minded, incapable, ill-tempered, prejudiced, or a bigoted political partisan; but from the moment he was made a judge, he was, as a judge, not only absolutely incorruptible, but it was unheard-of that he should be even approached with a view to bias or corrupt him.

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In the whole field of the alliance between the law and money-making scoundrelism, perhaps nothing stands forth so intensely and uniquely characteristic of the late régime as the colossal proportions attained by the systematic murder and attempts at murder of young children, for the sake of the money insured upon their lives—a line of business for which many of the largest companies arranged every possible facility, in the expectation that the parents, in a sufficient proportion of cases to

make it pay, would fail in their premiums or drink themselves to death before they could conveniently dispose of their offspring. The actual numbers of these parental speculations (successful or otherwise) it is not possible to estimate with any accuracy, as the parents and the agents almost invariably combined to keep the insurances a close secret.* But the fact that the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children† (the only organisation which seems to have found anything to criticise in the above aspects of profit-making) actually detected between 5,000 and 6,000 cases a year‡ out of an average of 20,000 in which it was strongly suspected—these figures being a mere drop in the ocean of cases not coming under the notice of the Society—makes it clear that the actual or attempted murders of children for insurance-money must have run into many scores of thousands a year.

To secure the coveted payments, deliberate starvation and the innocent-sounding but deadly "neglect" were the usual methods employed, coupled with the long-continued exposure of infants (often naked or in wet clothes) indoors and out-of-doors, in the bitterest weather, with a view to bring about "death from natural causes."§ When these processes were found dilatory or were not adopted, the alternatives officially catalogued by the Society included probably every method of torture employed by Domitian, the Inquisition, or the American Indians.‖

* The agents were quite ready to give perjured evidence before the courts if parents were prosecuted; see Report of N.S.P.C.C., 1892, page 44.

† 7, Harpur-street, London, W.C.

‡ 5,599 in 1892 (Report, 1893). This number could have been trebled or quadrupled had the Society been adequately provided with funds.

§ At Accrington, November 18th, 1891, a woman was prosecuted for causing the death of her youngest child (the second within three months, both insured). Deceased was made to sit on the flags for hours, and while suffering from bronchitis was placed in the draught of an open doorway. The insurance money was drawn the day after death. Sentence, *six weeks' hard labour.*—*Daily News*, November 19th.

‖ Apart from cruelties unfit for mention, cases were frequent of the use of red hot stoves and pokers (whose effects could be conveniently fathered upon "falls against the fire-grate"); besides putting pins into a child's nostrils;

That the parental relationship did not operate as the slightest bar to child-murder for insurance-money was evident from the fact that on an average only about three per cent. of the detected victims were stepchildren, and 5 per cent. illegitimate; while 67 per cent. were own legitimate children. As many of the offenders were in good social and pecuniary positions, and neither poverty nor large families had much to do with the prevalence of the offences,* the student of the late régime can only assume that the profit-mongering system had ample power to extinguish even that love of offspring which scarcely a single member of the brute creation fails to exhibit in a greater degree than we find in the deliberate child-butcher of the last century.

III.

So far, we have referred more to the vices and crimes of profit-mongering than to its inefficiency; but from an economic point of view it is difficult to imagine a state of things in which more time, labour, and capital could be wasted than by leaving the produce and supply of the country under the con-

thrusting lighted matches up them; leaving a baby untended in its cradle until toadstools grew around the child out of rottenness; leaving another to lie for days and nights on a mattress alive with maggots; keeping a child in a cold cellar till its flesh became green; keeping the stumps of little amputated legs sore; forcing the bone ring of a feeding-bottle up and down the throat of a three-months old baby; breaking a baby's limbs in three places, lifting and shaking it by the broken arms, and flinging it down again; ending a child's life by binding its arms together; knocking down with the fist a dying boy; driving out the first teeth of a baby with the fist; biting pieces out of a child's limbs, and burning the wounds with lighted matches; throwing a little girl of two years, ill of bronchitis, out of its bedroom window, breaking its bones and ending its life; scourging a child till it was a mass of bruises, then breaking its jaw in two; tying a child by its tightly tied thumbs with extended arms to a bedstead and beating it with a thornbush; tying a rope round a child, and hauling him repeatedly into and out of a canal; neglecting and starving a child till its toes gangrened and dropped off, while other infants were kept lying on wet hay and bundles soaked with filth; and other details innumerable (Report, 1892).

* Report 1892, page 46. "Three of the most revoltingly atrocious occurred in families of affluence, refinement, and good social position." "Average number of children in offenders' families 3·24; average weekly wage of offenders (excluding cases with £1,000 per annum) £1 2*s.* 6*d.*" (page 43). A typical case was one of a man in good wages who got rid of the whole of his ten children (all insured) one after another, all under a year old save one; prisoner was *acquitted* (page 48).

trol of individuals to be used as a source of private gain. In the case of manufacturers, hundreds of concerns, each with their separate staffs, plant, premises, travellers, and enormous advertising expenses, were employed to produce what half-a-dozen would have turned out as well if not better; in the case of retail supply the instances of needlessly multiplied sources of distribution ran into hundreds of thousands, and the waste of labour, management, and supervision involved in the wholly unnecessary shops and stores which cumbered the chief thoroughfares of our leading towns would alone have brought a poorer community to bankruptcy. In a single mile of a populous London suburb, an average of two dozen furniture shops, as many bootmakers and hatters, forty milliners and drapers, sixty provision shops, and a public-house at every alternate corner, where one of each would have met all reasonable requirements of the locality, indicated the chaos into which private trade had been led by a false system.

The combined action of private profit and unlimited competition had for its least serious result an almost infinite waste of time, energy, and money, in persuading people to buy what they did not want, in inducing them to covet what was novel simply for the sake of novelty, and in merely securing the transfer of A's custom from B to C, from C to D, and so on. A legion of travellers spent all their days coaxing grocers to purchase one kind of tea rather than another which was just as good; a quarter of a million sterling would be spent in advertisements to persuade Jones to wash himself with Smith's soap instead of Brown's; and every draper, milliner, carpet-seller, and paperhanger in the country based half his expectations of trade on making people dissatisfied with last year's patterns. Every blank wall, hoarding and railway station through the land displayed a chaos of lying appeals for custom, each advertiser imploring the readers to ignore his competitors in the same line of business, and to deal with him exclusively.

All this labour spent in unduly extending the area of sale produced its maximum of evil in the case of the drink traffic—a

traffic which, after requiring four hundred Acts of Parliament to regulate it, after absorbing every year more than £140,000,000 of the earnings of the community, and after developing and intensifying almost every misery that can afflict humanity, could still boast of the support of the State Church, of the aristocracy, and of the so-called Constitutional party in the House of Commons.

The mismanagement of the general business of production by the great manufacturers and their agents the bankers, can scarcely be credited. The most reckless disregard of the probable demand for output (whether of textile fabrics or other manufactures), together with a total absence of any system of co-ordinating the efforts of individuals in regard to general operations in any trade, was accompanied by a carelessness as to security for advances and the soundness of enterprises on the part of the great banks which verged on the criminal. This led to crises of overproduction, collapse of credit, wholesale dislocation of business, avalanches of bankruptcy, and widespread ruin, so uniformly and frequently, that their occurrence at certain regular intervals became a matter of routine expectation. Not only this, but the commercial community relied with such touching confidence on the almost abject incapacity and blundering of the financial magnates which produced these crises, that when for a wonder it happened that an expected crash did not come off, the amazed and delighted "City" could hardly find words adequate to express its adoration of the men who for once had managed to escape making a hideous mess of it.*

* A leading London daily wrote (apparently quite seriously) on the tiding-over of the scandalous Baring crisis of 1890: "The same qualities of strategy, pluck, and skill which go to make a good general have been exhibited by the leaders of the City in the recent crisis. Those who remember the effects of the crash in 1866 and 1878 will know from what the country has been saved. On the ground that the crisis has brought out the splendid qualities of our men of business, it is in no respect a subject of regret; on the contrary the way in which it has been dealt with is something of which England may fairly be proud."—*Daily News*, November 23rd, 1890.

Under the system of private profit, the whole economy of the nation was gradually but inevitably disorganised.

Because it paid employers better to hire labour to make cotton or iron goods to sell for foreign wheat, than to grow wheat at home, the disastrous change was brought about of the country ceasing to grow its own food. Hence half the soil went out of cultivation, and the labour divorced from it was gradually added to the hosts of the unemployed in the large towns, aggravating the frightful poverty, vice, and misery of their fellows and presenting an ever-growing danger to the community.

The almost infinite extension of the power of production in manufactures, brought about by the substitution of machinery for manual labour, was, as a matter of fact, the death-warrant of the system into which it was introduced. From the moment it was found that a machine could produce more cheaply than a man, the wage-profit system was doomed. A century was occupied in making this apparent to the nation, but the eventual result was never a moment in doubt, nor could any struggles of the dying régime do anything but accelerate its supersession.

The balance between the producer and the distributor was utterly destroyed. The more severe the competition amongst the manufacturers and agriculturists, the greater were the efforts to lessen the cost of production by reducing the wage element. Every day some fresh mechanical invention displaced and rendered superfluous a certain number of producers; these had to become distributors (wholesale or retail), or starve. Becoming distributors, they had to fight with the already excessive number of retailers for a share of the business insufficient for those trying to live by it, and impossible of indefinite extension. When the time came for the workmen to defeat attempts at lowering wages, fresh machinery enabled the master to dispense with a portion of his staff. Wages rose, but the number of unemployed rose with them.

In the desperate struggle for business all the old trade landmarks were swept away.

Down to the middle of the century the dividing line between the wholesale and the retail business was fairly well marked; for instance, a London house sold to a country wholesale house, and the latter to the retailers in its own district—all concerned made a profit, and with ordinary business qualifications both principals and employés might look forward to retirement, or a decent provision for their families. A generation later found all this changed. In every division of the supplying trades, competition drove wave upon wave of distributors upon each other's heels. The retailer had a score of rivals in the same street, each competing with the other for his share of a trade insufficient for a third of them. The provincial dealers, struggling against each other in enormously multiplied numbers, found a new and fatal competition in the shape of an army of travellers calling on their customers on behalf of the very London houses from which they purchased their own supplies. The metropolitan firms adopted this system *en masse*, and in addition to pushing a distinctly retail business, out of self-defence they imported direct and destroyed the business of the old importers and brokers. Two-thirds of the second-rate houses disappeared, the principals had to become employés, and for the employé retirement or acquired competence was a forgotten dream.

In every line of business similar features presented themselves; to sell more cheaply than his neighbour was a matter of life or death to both producer and distributor, and the final outcome as regards certain strata of the working classes was a state of things to which history affords no parallel.

IV.

The incessant throwing into the market of those whom machinery had rendered superfluous, led to a disproportion between workers and work, fatal to the chances of any kind of existence fit for human beings. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children slaved night and day to secure a pittance

which would not over-feed a respectable dog; they passed year after year without eating one hearty meal, wearing one decent garment, breathing one gasp of fresh air, or enjoying one day's recreation; they lived from childhood to age a life of hopeless, unbroken misery, varied only by disease or brutal violence, and ended only by the workhouse or a pauper's grave. Half of the whole population were born to an existence infinitely below that of the brutes; a third of these died under six months old.* How the rest survived was a thing which defied comprehension.

At least a million Londoners lived in slum tenements liable to be condemned as "unfit for habitation." 166,000 families were herded in single-room homes.† In some metropolitan districts the *average* was five families to every six rooms.‡ In Glasgow 41 out of every 100 families lived in one room, while in addition 37 out of the 100 lived in two only.§ The Liverpool Victoria Legal Friendly Society proscribed for that town alone 167 "streets wherein no members of the society may be entered."‖ Of the pestilential human rookeries in the east-end of London, we read "*every room* in these rotten and reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one cellar, a sanitary inspector reports finding a father, mother, three children, and a pig. In another room a missionary found a man ill with small-pox, his wife just recovering from her eighth confinement, and the children running about half-naked, and covered with dirt. Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little dead child lying in the same room. Another apartment contains father, mother, and six children, two of whom are ill with scarlet fever. In another, nine brothers and sisters, from 20 years of age downwards, live, eat, and sleep together. Wretched as these rooms are, they are beyond the means of

* Report, Industrial Renumeration Conference (Dr. C. R. Drysdale), 130

† Sidney Webb, "Reform of London," 18, 5.

‡ Report, Royal Commission, 1884.

§ Hyndman, "Historical Basis of Socialism," 353.

‖ Circular, October 13th, 1886.

many who wander about all day, picking up a living as they can, and then take refuge at night in one of the common lodging-houses that abound. In the sleeping rooms of these are long rows of beds on each side, sometimes sixty or eighty in one room. In many cases both sexes are allowed to herd together without any attempt to preserve the commonest decency. But there is a lower depth still. Hundreds cannot even scrape together the 2d. required to secure them the privilege of herding in those sweltering common sleeping rooms, and so they huddle together upon the stairs and landings, where it is no uncommon thing to find six or eight in the early morning."*

*

The toil undergone to maintain existence, even under such conditions as the above, passes belief. Of the tailors under the East-End sweating system (numbering 20,000) we read: "In rooms not more than nine or ten feet square, heated by a coke fire for the presser's irons, and at night lighted by flaring gas-jets, six, eight, ten, or even a dozen workers may be crowded, working often as much as 16 hours per day—in other cases 18 hours, minus meal times. Overtime is not in any sense recognised, and no matter how many hours may be worked it all counts in the day's work. Two women, working each 18 hours a day (on children's suits, at 3s. a dozen), every day for a week, earned 4s. 3d. each. Their average earnings they estimated at 3s. or 3s. 6d. a week, enough to pay the rent of their own little room and find them in tea and bread."† Amongst the nailmakers (15,000) and small chainmakers (10,000) in South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire, "the clear earnings of young women working from six in the morning to nine at night for six days a week—skilful, persistent, unwearying workers, their arms thin, but hardened by unceasing toil, their chests flat, their faces pallid, and their palms and

* "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London."

† Board of Trade Report, 1887.

fingers case-hardened by bellows, hammer, and rod—will run to 5s. 5d. per week."* London sempstresses earned from 4s. to 7s. a week for the most exhausting toil from week's end to week's end.† In Canning Town the standard price for shirt-making was 8d. per dozen; and in Manchester, the largest firms paid 7d. per dozen.‡ Children were paid 2½d. a gross (144) for making matchboxes. In the cotton mills of the north, the female can-minders had to move cans weighing sixteen or eighteen pounds more than 900 times a day.§ The much-vaunted "'prosperity" of Belfast depended almost wholly on the unlimited sweating of women and children. 41,900 out of the 97,000 workpeople there were females, and the bulk of the 26,500 women and girls employed in the linen trade were paid 1s. a day, and less. Owing to the mills being steamed up to 110 degrees or thereabouts, 67 per cent. of the workers died of phthisis and lung diseases, the highest mortality being at eighteen years of age, while half died before they were thirty.‖

In very many other cases of occupations where the wages were not utterly inadequate, the conditions under which the work had to be carried on were little short of murderous. Severe extremes of temperature, absence of ventilation, dust, noxious vapours, poison, and other elements of sickness and death, gave rise to quite a recognised group of industrial diseases associated with certain trades. Amongst these were "mason's lung," "sweep's cancer," "potter's rot," "hammer-man's palsy," "flock fever," "printer's phthisis," "miner's consumption," "brassfounder's ague," "grinder's rot" (Sheffield), "poncy" (linen-worker's disease), "shoddy fever," "leadworker's convulsions," "matchmaker's phossy jaw,"

* Board of Trade Report, November, 1888.

† Even when working for Court dressmakers and for Royalty. (*Daily Chronicle*, September 29th, 1892.)

‡ *Clarion*, May 7th and 14th, 1892.

§ Hyndman, 355, 373, 357.

‖ *Daily Chronicle*, May 23rd and 24th, 1893.

&c.; and every phase of blood-poisoning and general debility.*

Apart from miserable wages and revolting conditions of work, the hours of labour in innumerable occupations were prolonged to an extent which justified the comment that "it could hardly be called a system of slavery, for no slaves in the history of the world had ever been known to work so long."† The majority of shop-assistants worked from 75 to 90 hours per week, and sitting down was precluded by the withholding of seats of any kind, with the result that a very large proportion of the women were permanently invalided.‡ Barmaids frequently worked considerably over 100 hours per week,§ and laundresses from 70 to 80. Tram and bus employés were kept at their

* From innumerable similar instances may be selected the case of the chemical workers at St. Helens and Widnes, a large proportion of whom spent the winter in the hospitals, whilst their families went into the workhouse, and of whom we read—"While working in the chlorine chambers they envelop the neck, mouth, and nose, in several folds of woollen cloth, wear huge goggles, and bandage their legs with folds of thick brown paper fastened with a string. In a very brief period these protecting investments become completely rotten and fall to pieces. The dense wraps over the nose and mouth almost completely prevent breathing, and it is only by practice that the men can carry on sufficient respiration to sustain life. Even as it is, they can remain only a brief time within the chamber, and have to seek for fresh air outside. On their exit they are seen to be sweating profusely, and greatly exhausted, gasping for air, with inflamed eyes and highly-reddened skin, whilst mucus streams from the mucous membrane of the nose and the air passages, accompanied by cough. They are, in short, in a state of partial suffocation, with congestion of the lungs, induced not only by the gas, but also by the impediment to breathing from the dense protecting bandages over the face. For a few seconds the necessity for admitting air within the lungs precludes speech; but after a short period, by the action of outside air and diligent wiping away of the sweat, they get sufficiently refreshed to return to their painful labour" (Dr. J. T. Arlidge, "Hygiene of Occupations," 1892).

† Sir J. Lubbock (House of Commons, March 21st, 1893).

‡ This barbarity could have been stopped at any time by half-a-dozen words from half-a-dozen women of fashion, in deference to which class the practice was insisted on; but those words were never spoken. The "ladies" preferred shop-women to be invariably found standing when they entered a shop, for the same reason that they tortured with the bearing-rein their horses waiting outside—viz., that "it looked so much nicer."

§ Bolton was the first place to utilise (in 1893) a section of the Factory Acts, enabling local authorities to reduce the hours of the barmaids to 74 per week. This was at a time when all the artisans' Trade Unions were clamouring to have their hours reduced (from an average of 56) to 48 per week.

avocation from 100 to 115 hours a week, the latter figure being at an average of over 16 hours for every day, including Sundays. The position of postmen was almost as bad, and that of railway servants frequently worse. It is obvious that in the case of these out-door workers the ordinary disadvantages of want of time for recreation, study, or even for proper repose were intensified by the cruel wrong of almost complete divorce from home and family life; and many thousands of fathers for weeks at a time never saw their own children except when the latter were asleep.

*

Even under such conditions and at such rates of remuneration as we have described, work was so far from being available for those seeking it that *more than 1,000,000 able-bodied artisans were frequently out of employment*, with families dependent on them to the number of probably 3,000,000 more—these being maintained from union funds and other sources.*

Apart from the above, *every day 1,000,000 persons had to resort to pauper relief to keep alive*, and more than *three times* that number in the course of the year†—nine-tenths being children, aged, or insane—at a cost of £10,500,000 per annum, besides 2,000,000 who received alms from societies (£10,040,000) and private charity.‡

Of all persons over 70 years of age, 40 per cent. were permanent paupers.

Of the wage-earners, *one in every eight*§ was driven to accept poor-law relief, under conditions so revolting that the poor often died lingering deaths rather than submit to them.

The operation of the agricultural system (to which we are about to refer) not only added enormously to the pauperism of the towns, but in many country districts made *every aged labourer a pauper.*

* In 1893, 10 per cent. of all the male artisans, or about 1,300,000, were out of work through lack of employment (Board of Trade Return).

† Mulhall, Dictionary of Statistics, 346. ‡ Mulhall, 78.

§ Fabian Tract, No. 15.

In London one adult out of every three died in the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum.*

While this was going on, and while the industrial class of 32,000,000 was expected to be virtuous and happy on an average income of about 10d. per head per day,† a select clique of 25,000 persons divided £675,000,000 per annum amongst themselves, at the rate of £27,000 a year each.‡ Seventy-nine of these absorbed £8,101,607 per annum.§

*

The condition of the farm labourers and the arrangements under which the agriculture of the country was conducted were almost on a par with those of the dwellers in cities, and the single advantage possessed by the slave in the country over the slave in the town slums was, that he could starve, rot, and die in the fresh air. For centuries the landlords' policy of robbing the country people of their field plots, their commons, broad roadsides, rights of pasture, and rights of way, had been carried on for the purpose of making the labourers entirely dependent for a living on their employers' wages, by depriving them of all possible opportunity of cultivating a little land for their own use, or pasturing a cow to provide milk for their children. Eventually the cottage gardens were taken away, and the right to keep even a pig refused.‖ Families in constant employment

* One in four of all ages. In 1891, out of 89,122 deaths in London (51,171 being over 20 years old), 13,244 were in workhouses, 8,054 in hospitals, and 405 in lunatic asylums—a per centage, moreover, steadily increasing (Registrar-General's Report, 1892). The number of persons (about 1,000) who died while receiving out-door relief (usually insufficient) is not included in this calculation.

† In the aggregate, about £500,000,000 per annum (Mulhall £447,000,000, Giffen £550,000,000, Marshall £500,000,000, Leone Levi £521,000,000; Fabian Tract, No. 5).

‡ Mulhall, 278, 279. Fabian Tract, No. 5. These estimates of Sir L. Mallett, Leone Levi, R. Giffen, Mulhall, and Professor Marshall, being mainly based on income-tax returns, took of course no account of the amount of income fraudulently withheld from assessment by the well-to-do classes—an amount probably not less than £150,000,000 per annum.

§ Financial Reform Almanac, 1893, page 46.

‖ Agriculture Commission Report, 1870.

went months without any bacon or meat, living on nothing but potatoes and salt, bread and water. Milk could not be obtained, and the children suffered terribly in consequence ; in places the diet consisted wholly of bread, cheese, and potatoes. Fuel was so beyond their means, that families as a rule never had fire except at mealtimes, even in the depth of winter.* Women worked (while it was light enough) twelve hours a day, for 5s. or 6s. a week—children the same hours for 2s. or 3s. ; the latter often rising at half-past four and walking several miles to their work.† Men's wages were as low as 8s. a week in East Anglia, 8s. with a hovel, or 9s. without, in Dorsetshire, and 7s. in Wiltshire.‡

The cottages of the hinds were so badly built, drained, and repaired, and so utterly inadequate in their accommodation, that it would seem as if disease and vice in their wretched occupants had been specially designed by the owners. Very few hovels had more than two bedrooms, an enormous number only one. "Modesty must be an unknown virtue, decency an unimaginable thing, where, in one small chamber, with the beds lying as thickly as they can be packed, father, mother, young men, lads, grown-up and growing girls—two and sometimes three generations—are herded promiscuously where every operation of the toilette and of nature, dressings, undressings, births, deaths, is performed by each within the sight or hearing of all ; where children of both sexes, to as high an age as twelve or fourteen, occupy the same bed ; where the whole atmosphere is sensual, and human nature is degraded into something below the level of swine."§ To these dens, the only alternative—and one not always available for lack of space—was the workhouse, to which all turned as a matter of course as soon as they were invalided or incapacitated by toil, age, disease, or starvation.

* Report. Evidence 150A, 180B, and 20.

† Report 1, page 74. Report 2, Evidence 301.

§ Reports, 1870, and Labour Commission, 1893; *Daily Chronicle*, June 4th, 1893.

‡ Dr. Fraser in Report, 1870, page 35. Labour Commission, 1893.

Such were the main features of the farm labourer's life who lived on the land; but they sank into insignificance when compared with the "gang" system which toward the end of the century almost superseded fixed labour. The "gangers" were men who hired men, women, and children, and led them in herds about the country, taking jobs of harvesting, &c., from the farmers, and making what they could out of each contract. By this means, and by the utilisation of machinery for a considerable part of the year's operations, the farmers were enabled to dispense with a standing staff of labourers almost completely. The "gangs" were simply and absolutely slaves, *pro tem.*, were fed on the vilest food, and herded together in barns, hovels, or sheds, regardless of sex and of every other consideration.* The economy of the system to the farmers led to an enormous increase of it as the century advanced, and in some counties it became the only method of employing labour.†

The advantages of working the "gang" system, as compared with the plan of keeping labourers all the year round (whether by means of wages or pauper relief), were so great that in many districts the farmers did their best to get rid of the resident labourers altogether, in order to save wages and reduce the winter poor-rates; and in this they were cordially helped by the landlords, whose rents of course largely depended on the extent to which the tenants could keep down their wage-expenses. When it was found that, wretched as their homes were, the labourers displayed the usual reluctance to be evicted from them, an Act of Parliament was devised to provide a special machinery for getting rid of the residential peasantry. This Act enabled the "Rural Sanitary Authority" (everywhere, of course, consisting of farmers or

* Report on Agriculture, 1843.

† Report of Commission, 1869, Evidence 121. The result, even amongst the youngest boys and girls, was the most horrible immorality, foul and blasphemous language, and perfectly bestial habits unblushingly practised in an open manner in the fields (Report, Evidence 291). "The women are far worse than the men" (page 78); "the older the girls the greater the evil" (Evidence 250).

landlords), to demolish any house property they chose to consider "unfit for human habitation," and thereby drive the occupants out of the district altogether. As most of the labourers' hovels had been "unfit for human habitation" for half a century at least, and had only been left standing because the occupants (who received out-door relief all the winter) could not be accommodated in the workhouses, the Act enabled whole districts to be cleared at once, and drove the homeless labourers in a body up to London and the great towns, to add to the desperate ranks of the unemployed and destitute in those places. The local rates were of course largely relieved, machinery and the gang-master took the place of the peasantry of old days, and the "landed interest" scored a characteristic triumph. To conceal the real scope and intention of the Act and thereby elude inconvenient criticism, clauses were added calling upon *town* Sanitary Authorities to provide house accommodation equal in extent to what they might demolish; but the *rural* authorities were, of course, expressly exempt from an obligation which would have been fatal to the objects of the Act. "The Housing of the Working Classes Act," as the measure was humorously styled by its authors, was passed by the Conservative Government of 1890, with the eager sympathy of the Whig landlords in both Houses of Parliament, and for the rest of the century was paraded before a guileless public as a piece of beneficent legislation conceived solely with a regard to the health and well-being of the poor.

V.

The abominations of our agricultural system, the descent of the actual producers of our food from a position of comfort and almost luxury to that of slaves, paupers, and hunted vagabonds, and the horrors of sweating and overcrowding in the town slums, were almost entirely the effect of a single cause. This was *the transfer of the national soil from the community to a handful of private owners;* and to the history of this transfer a brief reference may be here made.

The partition of the land of the United Kingdom stands out as probably the most stupendous piece of organised brigandage ever perpetrated in any age or country; it is at least certain that no nation in the world was ever more impudently robbed than Great Britain by its territorial aristocracy. To detail the steps by which the ancient and only proper tenure of the soil by and for the community was departed from, would occupy us too long, and we will here only indicate the nature of the arrangements to which the term "feudal" was applied at the period of our history antedating the plunder of the nation by its guardians.

Under the feudal system, private ownership of land, as it came to be understood in later times, had no existence. The tenure of the soil, from the largest barony to the smallest crofter, was that of occupation based on service, and was essentially a delegation of the rights of the crown—*i.e.*, the State—for the purposes of local territorial administration. The theory was that the feudal baron received land to administer for the crown; it was his business to secure from the section of the country under his charge, men, horses, and provisions in case of war, to protect it by various fortified places in his own occupation, to administer justice, keep the peace, and perform all the ordinary functions attached to local government. From him the occupiers of smaller estates held in a similar way, with similar duties, and so on, down to the smallest subdivisions. There was no ownership, no title, no rent; simply the exaction of service as a condition of occupation in every grade. The custom of continuing the baronial authority in the same family in the person of the eldest son or next heir implied no ownership by the family; if the crown were dissatisfied (and happened to be powerful enough) the baron *pro tem.* was deprived of his administration, and the crown proceeded to appoint a successor to the barony, or a portion of it. No one supposed for a moment that any proprietary rights had been invaded by this course, or that the new baron was placed in any different position from his predecessor. The assignment of

the administration of the manors and smaller divisions became hereditary as a question of domestic convenience, not as a matter of proprietary right; every holder, from the lowest to the highest, held possession on service of his feudal superior.*

The condition of our agricultural population under this system at its zenith, during the whole of the fifteenth century, was remarkable. Poverty was unknown. Almost every cultivator had the option of working for good wages or raising produce and rearing sheep and cattle for himself. Land was open to every seeker of it for cultivation, and the commons afforded all the pasturage needed by individuals for their own requirements. "The labourers ate, drank, and worked well, and foreigners gazed in wonder at the rich clothing, sturdy frames, and independent mien of our English commonmen."† A labourer could earn a good cow by less than six weeks' work at the current wage; a sow by ten days'; a fat sheep by three; and a fat goose by rather more than one. Eighteen days' work would purchase him a quarter of the best wheat.‡ "Sumptuary laws prove how well-to-do the people were. Their luxurious living quite scandalised the upper classes, who thought they ought to restrain such woeful waste by special enactment. Accordingly a statute was framed in 1463, by which agricultural labourers were not allowed to use materials for clothing

* "Allodial (absolute) property no subject now has; it being a received and now undeniable principle in law, that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King." Blackstone (Commentaries). "All lands or tenements in England, in the hands of subjects, are holden mediately or immediately of the King." Coke (Institutes). "Under the feudal system the proprietor was the crown, as representing the nation; while the subordinate tenures were held with duties attached to them, and were liable, on non-fulfilment, to forfeiture. Land never was private property in that personal sense in which we speak of a thing as our own, with which we may do as we please." J. A. Froude. "The ancient principle of the English Law that the nation was the ultimate owner of the soil." Frederic Harrison. "The history of the gradual, stealthy, but really nefarious revolution, in which *landlords*, by their own legislative power, and their influence over lawyers, changed themselves into *landowners*, needs to be popularised." Prof. F. W. Newman. (Quoted in Land Nationalisation Society's Tract, xxxv.)

† Hyndman, "Historical Basis, &c.," 2.

‡ Thorold Rogers, "History of Agriculture in England," iv. 3.

which cost more than two shillings a yard, nor were they to have a pair of stockings which cost more than fourteen-pence a pair ; silver girdles were also prohibited. Twenty years later the labourers were allowed to have stockings which cost eighteen-pence a pair, and a wife might by law spend no less a sum than one shilling and eight-pence on her head-dress. Considering the fall which has since taken place in the value of money, these statutes amount to pretty much the same thing as if to-day Parliament passed an act to prohibit common ploughmen from appearing in a garb of rich Genoa velvet, with silk stockings, and gold buttons and studs, whilst their wives should on no account have caps of the most costly Brussels lace."*

During the decay of the feudal system, this happy state of things rapidly disappeared. The acquisition of Parliamentary power by the barons was made the means of fundamentally altering the whole land-tenure of the realm. They first of all deprived the soil of its status as national property, and then proceeded to turn their own administrative function into that of permanent and exclusive proprietorship. They secured perpetuity of tenure in their own families by the far-reaching laws of entail and primogeniture, and completed the robbery of the soil by claiming its whole mineral wealth, besides appropriating to themselves everything in the shape of fish, flesh, or fowl it produced, by game laws of inhuman severity. The small holdings were taken from the labourers, and the latter turned gradually into mere wage-earning slaves.

The final blow was struck when Henry VIII. invented his "Reformation" in order to divide amongst his fellow-miscreants that portion of the national domains which had previously been administered by the Church. The new landlords set themselves to exterminate the peasantry in order to turn the old arable lands into sheep-runs. Practically the whole agricultural population was evicted from home and holding. Those of the dispossessed and starving cultivators who were not retained as herdsmen or labourers were either enslaved or

* Hyndman, 11, 12.

simply butchered by scores of thousands to prevent the expense of their maintenance falling upon the land-thieves.* The more substantial yeomen were next attacked by the great territorial brigands, and every weapon of intrigue, oppression, and legal chicane employed to dispossess them of their holdings. At the conclusion of the seventeenth century there were 180,000 farm freeholders in England; a century later the class was practically extinct.† The enclosure of the commons, greens, open spaces, and broad roadside pasturages was carried on—under Parliamentary sanction or otherwise—with such ruthless energy that in many counties not a yard of public land was left in the enjoyment of its proper owners.

Having deprived the nation of its soil, which had previously borne all the charges of national and local administration, the robbers turned their attention to the task of transferring these burdens to the shoulders of their victims. The landlord Convention Parliament of 1660 removed the cost of national defence and government from land to excise. The rent-paying tenant was invented, and all the charges for the relief of the poor, the making and maintaining of roads, for police, and the general local administration were thrown upon him. The leasehold system followed, and in its train the infamous appropriation of the tenant's improvements and of the increase of value,‡ or

* Henry VIII. hung 72,000 of the peasants—a tenth of their whole number. Elizabeth disposed of from 300 to 400 per annum only. (R. Heath, "The English Peasant," 1893.) By the 1 Edward VI., c. 3, men and women able to work, and who lived idly for three days, were to be branded with a red hot iron on the breast with the letter V, and to be slaves for two years to the informer. If the slave ran away from his master for the space of fourteen days he was to be his slave for life, and to be branded on the forehead or cheek with the letter S; if he ran away the second time he was to suffer death as a felon. *(Ibid.)*

† Toynbee, "Industrial Revolution," 59.

‡ The value added to the property of landlords by mere competition (wholly irrespective of any contribution or improvement by themselves) amounted in London alone to £110,000,000 between 1866 and 1891. (Prof. Sidney Webb, Fabian Tract, No. 30.) "I once saw a lease of a nobleman's London estate in Elizabeth's reign. It was £30 a year. At the present time it is reputed to give an annual rent of a quarter of a million. This growth is entirely the work of other people, of their presence, and of their outlay." (Prof. Thorold Rogers, "Subjects of the Day," 11, 66.)

"unearned increment" (arising from competition and the pressure of population upon area), which brought about the fabulous wealth of the great landholders of the nineteenth century and the eventual extinction of their order.

Finally by continuous control of both Houses of the Legislature they contrived to escape not only all those historical charges upon the land which they had succeeded in throwing upon the tenants, but practically every new statute tax for imperial purposes. They removed their estates from the operation of the death-duties, and by arranging that they should (as magistrates) constitute the local courts of appeal for assessments under the land and house duties, they evaded these imposts almost altogether. The same machinery enabled them practically to escape being rated even on property in their own personal occupation.*

Every statutory reform or improvement which involved expense was arranged by the landlords to be carried out by local rates levied on their tenants. Sanitation, State education, hospitals, asylums, parks and open spaces, necessary public buildings, and improvements of the *landlords' own property*, were all made burdens on the occupiers of buildings and not on the owners of the land.†

* Chatsworth was rated in 1890 at £1,500 a year; Hatfield House (where the Marquesses of Salisbury maintained themselves in splendour on the rack-rents of one of the worst St. Giles slums—afterwards sold) at £900 a year; Blenheim Palace at £460 a year—the whole three put together being a lower assessment than that of many a West-End or City shop. Prof. Thorold Rogers speaks of a "mansion in the west of England, with a park nine miles in circuit, containing a house which had cost £250,000 to build, racing stables, and keepers' lodges—rated at £250 a year." ("Subjects of the Day," II., 57.)

† In London in 1891 *land* worth £418,000,000 paid no rates, and only £500,000 in taxes; *buildings* worth £212,000,000 paid £7,000,000 in rates and taxes. (Prof. Sidney Webb, "Taxation of Ground Rents.")

The following table illustrates the extent to which (in England and Wales) the landlords succeeded in transferring the burden of local rates from themselves to the occupying tenants of houses, &c.

Year.	Rates borne by Land.	Per cent.	Rates borne by Houses, &c.	Per cent.
1817	£6,730,000	66·66	£3,370,000	33·33
1868	5,500,000	33·33	11,000,000	66·66
1891	4,260,000	15·31	23,560,000	84·69

Economist, April, 1893.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the swindle of taxation and rating was brought by the "propertied" class to its high-water mark of success. The landowners' contribution to the national burdens was limited to the bare fortieth or one hundred and twentieth part of what they chose to return as their annual incomes, in the shape of a 6d. or 2d. income-tax; while the breadwinners of the nation were mulcted to the extent of *one-sixth of their entire earnings*.

Out of the total imperial and local revenue of £144,000,000 a year in 1892, the workers paid £132,000,000, or thirteen-fourteenths of the whole; while their aggregate income (£860,000,000) was less than two-thirds of the total annual wealth of the country (£1,350,000,000).*

Thus the land, which previously to its being thieved from the community had borne all the charges of the State, now bore none. The thieves had, in addition to stealing the soil of

* The property class (of only about 450,000 families) was of course precluded by mere paucity of numbers from paying any appreciable fraction of the £45,000,000 raised (in 1892) by customs and excise (taxes on groceries, drink, and tobacco), or the £26,000,000 obtained from stamps, the post office, and the telegraphs. The bulk of the former was contributed by the working class out of their income of £500,000,000, and the whole of the latter by the traders out of their income of £360,000,000—the latter paying also £6,500,000 of income-tax (the proportion of their income exempted or abated amounting to about £100,000,000) besides the balance of customs and excise. These two classes also paid the whole of the local rates, viz., £53,400,000. The total imperial revenue was £91,428,533. (Fabian Tracts, Nos. 5 and 39.) It may be added that this stupendous plunder of the workers was carried on absolutely without their recognising the trick of it in the least; and that the chief merit of elaborating and perfecting the financial system which made it possible, was due to the transcendent genius of that most astute and audacious champion of the "property interest" and resolute foe of the democracy, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. Considering the crass ignorance of the nineteenth century public regarding the "indirect taxation" juggle of their day, it is not a little curious to recollect what happened when this typical Tory went to the country in 1874 on a programme of abolishing the income-tax, with the object of setting the members of his class as practically free from Imperial taxation as they were already from local rating. In spite of the popular dislike of the income-tax so carefully fostered by Liberal capitalists and Tory landlords for their own very obvious purposes, the electors seem on this single occasion to have displayed a glimmer of intelligence; and Mr. Gladstone's characteristic piece of "property" thimble-rig had the result of converting his former majority of 104 into a minority of 52.

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the country, succeeded in living in it almost tax-free, while the victims of this legalised brigandage were compelled to pay for everything.

To secure this gigantic system of plunder not only from attack but even from criticism, the happy idea was conceived of affecting to consider it as something not infamous but peculiarly sacred. For centuries no stone was left unturned to educate the nation into a superstitious reverence for the tenure of land; statutes without number gave the owner despotic control over every detail of the use and occupation of the soil, threw every obstacle in the way of its alienation, and assigned to the landlord priority of claim over every other creditor; while the aid of the Church was called in to inculcate the notion of sacrilege, almost of blasphemy, as attaching to any questioning of the perfection of the system.

The Church, which was largely recruited from the ranks of the thieves and was paid for by ten per cent. of the plunder under the name of tithes, undertook the duty with alacrity, sold itself body and soul to the land interest, and remained till the end of the system its most fervent and unscrupulous partisan and the servile lackey and tool of the British oligarchy. From every pulpit the duty of submission to the great men of the soil was inculcated, the theory of Heaven-sent social distinctions preached, and their victims solemnly adjured to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their "betters."

The result of this "Holy Alliance" was what might have been expected. The country became steeped in adoration of rank and wealth to an extent which distinctly affected the national character, and the British snob was evolved—a species of human being to whom title was a fetish, "society" a paradise, and the fads of his idols a religion.

No section of the community sank lower under this degradation than the land and church dignitaries themselves. Deprived of any worthy career, brought up in unearned luxury, pampered, flattered, fawned on, and truckled to, the

scions of the aristocracy shared with the criminal classes and the lawyers the distinction of being the most mischievous element in the social state. For their benefit, ingenuity exhausted itself in the invention of every kind of vulgar folly, reckless extravagance, and senseless vice. Gambling hells, racing, the prize-ring, and the demi-monde owed their maintenance to the *jeunesse dorée*; and the class would have debauched itself out of existence but for the corrective of devotion to the outdoor pastime of slaughtering and torturing the lower animals for "sport," together with the salutary British fondness for athletic exercises.

All these vices the Church tacitly sanctioned in return for a thick and thin support of its claims to priestly domination, and the contract was faithfully-carried out when the lay and clerical peers had it in their power to defend each others' prerogatives.*

This iniquitous compact deprived the higher dignitaries of the Church of all popular sympathy or influence. No one, least of all the hardworking inferior clergy, thought of the deans or bishops except as astute men of the world, who had played their cards well, who could be trusted to be smooth-spoken under equivocal circumstances, to keep the criticism of sin within the limits of good breeding, and in general to make their apostolic status harmonise with an aspect of society as contemptible as any recorded in history. That as individuals they should be cultured, respectable, and moral was of course demanded by the etiquette of the "cloth"; but no one looked to them to denounce or even discourage wickedness in high places; no one ever heard of their declining to officiate at the most palpably venal marriage of the season; no one expected them to refuse to dine with the most profligate peer on the rolls. Least of all did anyone dream of seeking their assist-

* A typical illustration of this bargain between lay vice and clerical tyranny occurred in 1883, when the lay peers, at the instigation of the bishops, threw out the "Deceased Wife's Sister" Bill; while in return, a few days afterwards, the whole bench of Reverend Fathers in God absented themselves from the division on the Pigeon-shooting Abolition Bill, which was accordingly defeated.

ance or guidance in connection with social, industrial, or economic problems, or even imagine that they were capable of understanding them in the slightest degree.

As regards any active evangelising zeal in the Protestant pulpits, it was practically extinct. The bulk of the episcopal churches were simply fashionable Sunday lounges, the average dissenting chapels mere centres of social fuss, smug sectarian cant, and political wire-pulling. The earnestness, devotion, and fiery enthusiasm which lifted men from earth to heaven had become the heritage of a mere handful of the clergy and the remarkable organisation of the Salvation Army.

VI.

The world of politics was, under such circumstances as we have described, dominated as a matter of course by the single idea of plunder. Its centre of gravity, the Legislature, existed for no other purpose than to perpetuate the theft of the soil, to maintain its exemption from taxation, to increase, whenever possible, the tribute extorted from the citizens for being born on it, to keep at their highest point the privileges of land and capitalist monopoly, and to debar, in every way that ingenuity could devise, the workers from securing representation.

The territorial branch, or House of Lords, was based on a comparatively simple phase of robbery, which, however infamous, was commonplace; but the elected section, or House of Commons, had the unique distinction of gathering to itself every element of scoundrelism in the empire, and of endowing them with a flavor of villany peculiarly its own.

It was a tradition with the members of the two Houses to divide themselves into two parties, in order to fight for the spoils and power of office while firmly united in keeping up the plunder of the nation. These represented the aristocratic or Tory monopolists of land, and the plutocratic or Liberal monopolists of capital. Two convenient devices were adopted to enable the electorate to distinguish between them. The

Tories posed as fervent upholders of a "Constitution" which happened to have no existence. The Liberals affected a concern for certain "Reforms," which they feared and detested, and which they burked to the very utmost of their ability whenever opportunity offered.

The electoral contests between the parties were usually arranged to take place upon some demand for the barest elements of political or financial justice which might at the moment be upon the surface of public opinion, and was, of course, equally disliked both by the aristocrats and the plutocrats.

If the latter received enough votes to secure or retain office, they usually arranged with the other side that any improvement which they might find themselves obliged to propose should be a pure sham, and that under no circumstances should it either cost the property interest a single farthing, or give the breadwinners of the nation any increased facilities for getting hold of Parliamentary power. Every so-called "Reform Act," dealing with representation, was thus carefully neutralised by tricks of registration; while contested elections were maintained at a prohibitive standard of cost, and membership (contrary to the practice of every civilised country except Spain) was left unpaid, in order to confine its privileges to the wealthy.

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No real legislative improvement was ever effected unless the spitefulness of party feeling rendered the combatants a little incautious, or unless (as occasionally happened) the plutocrat Liberals found that they could not persuade the land party to concede a share of certain of their monopolies, and, consequently, determined to destroy them. In this latter way the Church and territorial monopolies of municipal offices, of the Universities, of the Army and Navy, and of the Civil Service, were either diminished or extinguished. As examples of honest men coming by their own through the quarrels of the thieves

may be instanced the abolition of the Tory Corn Laws by the plutocrat manufacturers in order to be able (by means of cheaper food) to reduce still further the starvation wages of their "hands." In revenge for this, the Tories (despite the furious opposition of the Cobden-Bright Liberal-capitalist gang of slave-drivers, child-sweaters, and murderers)* passed the Factory Acts of 1847, &c., with the object of making labour more expensive to the manufacturers. Later on the same party promoted a Household Suffrage Act, to curry favour with the town artisans, who hated their "Liberal" employers; while, in return, the latter gave votes to the agricultural labourers, who detested the Tory squires and parsons. All these provisions, shams as they were intended to be, operated more or less in favour of the democracy; and a certain enormous blunder of the Tories in passing the County Councils Act of 1889 really opened the door to wide measures of industrial emancipation.

Apart from these unintentional benefits to the community, all the show measures and all the election cries from the death

* Some idea of the atrocities maintained and defended for so many years by this gang may be gathered from the following: "In ninety years the cotton manufacture used up *nine generations* of operatives." (Ferrand.) "Children of six, five, and even of *three* years of age were employed in the stifling heat and stench of the cotton factories, and were obliged systematically to take emetics to get rid of the cotton dust they swallowed. Day and night labour from twelve to fourteen, fifteen, and even sixteen hours was the rule, with frequently no rest on Sunday, and no time for meals except during work. Out of 23,000 factory hands, 14,000 were under the age of eighteen." (Government Report, 1816.) "In iron and coal mines, children, being small and handy, were particularly convenient for small veins of coal and pits where no great amount of capital was embarked; they could get about where horses and mules could not. Little girls were forced to carry heavy baskets of coal up high ladders, and dragged the coal bunkers along instead of animals. Women were commonly employed underground at the filthiest tasks, both they and the men working together practically naked. Women toiled up to their waists in water until the very last hour of pregnancy, and were dragged to their work again by the overseers a week afterwards." (Report, 1842.) "In the iron mines, children of from four to nine years old were dragged out of bed at four or five o'clock in the morning to undergo sixteen hours' work in the shafts, and if they faltered during their fearful labour were mercilessly flogged with leathern straps by the overseer." (Report, 1842; 66, 91, 24.) "In the Birmingham metal works, children of five years old worked for fifteen hours a day; the same in Wolverhampton and Sheffield. In the glass factories, children were worked eighteen hours a day." (Report, 1843.)

of Palmerston down to the last decade of the century, including the immensely convenient series of quackeries called "Irish legislation," were devised and dangled before the public with the single motive of burking or delaying the dreaded rating of ground-rents and graduation of income-tax, which were anathema alike to the official Liberal-Radical and Tory-Conservative; while the former displayed an ingenuity and audacity in thus sacrificing the cause of industry to the cause of property, which left their political rivals hopelessly in the rear.*

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While this was the attitude of the actual party leaders and wire-pullers, the rank and file of their followers in the House of Commons represented every phase of robbery, jobbery, and snobbery which could curse a civilised community. This arose inevitably from the very nature of the case. It was obvious that so far as legislation could create, protect, or threaten general and individual vested interests, whether of office, property, or privilege, so far it would be the object of the said interests to control the legislative machine. The men already rich entered Parliament to protect their riches; the adventurers to become rich. Practically every second candidate was an open and avowed self-seeker; his profession of political principle was a mere formula put into his mouth by the party caucus-office to serve the exigencies of the moment. Lawyers entered the House to push business, tout for office, and keep up the lucrative abuses of the Courts; railway directors to fleece the public and obstruct their competitors; great landlords and sons of peers to maintain the iniquitous laws of property; brewers and public-house owners to oppose any

* A conspicuous instance of this happened in 1885-1886, when the leaders of the two parties got up the famous sham-fight over the question of Home Rule for Ireland. This programme, known by every official Tory to be perfectly harmless, and by every official Liberal to be perfectly useless, was astutely utilised by the allied wirepullers of both sides in such a way as to burke every important financial and social reform for nearly ten years.

diminution of the drink traffic; manufacturers to keep down the labour interest; and wealthy parvenues to obtain a label of respectability. Every one of these sordid or ignoble motives arose out of the thirst for wealth or its possession, and were only possible under a régime which generated social inequalities and systematised injustice, which made the rich strong and the poor weak, which sanctioned corruption and terrorism as legitimate weapons in the social warfare, and necessitated local and imperial administration becoming the hunting ground of party adventurers. The only thing which had nothing to do with the political struggle was, as we have said, the party programme of the day. That was invented simply to fight over.

Into this sink of scoundrelism a handful of really earnest and single-minded reformers—the mouthpieces of a host of kindred spirits in the country at large—fought their way in order to extort some concessions of justice and humanity from the open hostility of the Tories, and the scarcely-veiled treachery of the Liberals and Radicals. Many of these reformers, after years of unavailing struggles against the brute force or hypocrisy of the two official parties, retired from the contest defeated, sickened, and heartbroken. Others, scarcely more fortunate, would find almost every proposal for reform taken out of their hands to bolster up a Ministerial programme, mangled beyond recognition, turned into a deliberate sham, and noisily placed to the legislative credit of its new sponsors; while later on, the less intelligent of its advocates in the country wondered why so little benefit resulted from a measure they had spent so much time, labour, and money to get carried into law.

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During all these infamies the country at large, with ineffable imbecility, organised, registered, canvassed, and voted to maintain in office one gang or the other of its plunderers—which was as if the goose interested itself arduously in the sauce with which it was to be eaten.

VII.

The foregoing phases of the social organism resulted primarily from the profit-competition system ; but the use of *money*, whether in coin or paper, led directly to the evolution of that section of the predatory classes which consisted of professional loafers and roughs, petty thieves, and dangerous criminals of the burglar and garotter types.

Thieving, shoplifting, forgery, burglary, and highway robbery arose quite simply from the use of currency, and were absolutely inseparable from it. As long as men possessed something of which they could be robbed, something which, if not money, could be turned into money, something which was just as effective in the hands of an unlawful as of a lawful possessor, robbery followed as a matter of course. The instincts which in other grades of society produced the lawyer, the sweater, the slave-driver, the company-promoter, and the blackmailer, operated more simply among the lower classes and in more direct lines, but that was all.

The currency system made what would otherwise have been impossibly cumbersome a matter of ultra simplicity. The man with money in his pocket could bribe the man without it to do for him any and every dirty job, literally or metaphorically, which he might dislike to do himself ; fetch and carry for him, scavenge for him, vote for him, lie, bully, oppress, and occasionally murder for him. Because any given half-crown was exactly as negotiable by one person as by any other, starving women could be tempted to sell their bodies, and men their souls.

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So far we have referred to the operation of the late system mainly as it may have been considered to affect the masculine portion of the community. As regards its specific effect upon women the worst results amongst the middle classes were probably little more than a vulgar striving after the pretence of greater wealth than they actually enjoyed, and the cultivation

of a supercilious contempt for their sisters of the ranks beneath them; but amongst the women of the very highest and the very lowest grades the outcome was almost universal prostitution.*

Those of the upper strata of society, having every comfort, convenience, luxury, and amusement, every advantage of education, culture, travel and society secured to them during their whole lives, sold themselves for a little higher rank or a greater personal income—under the form of marriage. Their sisters of St. John's Wood and the gutter, being placed between starvation or suicide, and a life of immorality, preferred to keep alive. The marvel of it was that the married section of this class *looked down upon the others.*

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The above and innumerable other conditions of a social system based on profit-making and competition may be epitomised in two or three facts whose very possibility can scarcely at the present day find acceptance amongst our younger students.

One consequence of the ever-increasing pressure and anxiety of commercial and professional life under the late régime was that the duration of human life was steadily diminishing. Comparisons between the actuarial tables of Dr. Farr (on the death-rates of 1838-54), formerly used by all the life assurance companies, and those of Dr. Ogle (rates of 1871-80), which superseded them, first brought to light the startling fact that, although (owing doubtless to improved medical and sanitary science) at the later period there was an increased expectation

* Amongst the latter class this career was commenced almost in childhood. "Of the 9,000 women pursuing this calling in one of our great seaports, a late inquiry showed that 1,500 were under fifteen years of age, and of these about a third were under thirteen years of age." (Mrs. Jos. Butler, "Woman's Work," Introd. xix.) "Prostitution amongst children of twelve years of age steadily increases in the west of London." (Ann. Police Report, 1881.) A circumstance that intensified this evil was that the career of domestic service was altogether closed to girls of the lowest ranks, as the various sections of the middle class would not employ them, whatever their moral character might be, and in their own rank of course no one could afford to do so.

of male life up to the nineteenth year, yet from that age the probability of surviving steadily decreased as compared with the older statistics; showing that in spite of all the resources of medicine, hygiene, and improved conditions of physical well-being, the days of men were being rapidly shortened by the mental stress and strain inseparable from the business slavery of the generation. The nett result of all this was strikingly illustrated by the fact that while in 1871-81 the census returns showed the population to be increasing at the rate of 931 per day, in 1891 the rate had not only shown no expansion, but had actually fallen to 781.*

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The twentieth century citizen, accustomed to a régime under which *every man is secure of an occupation (and with it an income) as a mere matter of course*, will find it still more difficult to credit another disastrous effect of the system of competition for private profit.

This was that while men exceptionally energetic, pushing, astute, unscrupulous, or technically expert in business could usually make their position fairly secure under almost any conditions, nevertheless for the men of *merely average* education, intelligence and experience, sober, industrious, honest and persevering, there was—as such—only the very slightest chance of earning a living in any capacity whatever, unless aided by purely adventitious circumstances.

The bulk of those who did earn a living, effected it by reason of accidents wholly apart from their qualifications. Their positions, whether as employés or employers, had either been obtained for them by parental, family, or friendly influence, or had resulted from the assignment or inheritance of the previous success of others obtained under widely different circumstances.

Innumerable employers were enabled to maintain themselves simply because their fathers had established businesses to which they had succeeded. Countless hordes of clerks,

* Reg. Gen. Prel. Report, 1891.

shopmen, and assistants owed their positions to the fact that some relative or acquaintance had exerted pressure to secure for them particular berths in particular firms for which they were not more specially qualified than others not so recommended.

No one of these, displaced by bad trade, accident, or ill-health, had the slightest real foothold in the struggle for existence. Over millions of English homes there brooded, remote and dim, or near and lowering, the shadow of uncertainty. There might be culture, refinement, present comfort, and even luxury; but for the bread-winner there was ever the whisper of failing trade, of fatal competition, of shrunken commission, of lowered salary—most terrible of all, "reduction of staff." To the average middle class employé—the mere machine of the desk and counter—discharge, dismissal, or loss of place was practical ruin. Not one such employé in a thousand, if he lost his existing situation, could rely with any certainty on finding another. His qualification for his post had been principally that of possession; in the open market he was nowhere—one amongst a crowd of superfluous men, when to be superfluous was to die of starvation.

That such a condition of affairs should breed an infinitude of galling annoyance, meanness and petty tyranny was almost nothing in view of the unceasing anxiety which accompanied it. For all but a fraction of the nation, life was one long slavery, darkened by a desperate fear that the slavery might end.

Such were some of the leading features of the social organism in Great Britain towards the close of the nineteenth century. Such was the state of things in a community which conceived itself to be "civilised," and called itself "Christian."

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Certain animadversions, however, coming from precisely the quarters where the new doctrine might have expected a welcome, require a passing allusion.

It was quite open to any fair-minded man to regard the scheme of State Industrialism as impracticable even if suitable, or unsuitable if practicable. He might reasonably expect it to fail for one or many reasons; he might apprehend violence or disorganisation during the process of its introduction. But he was obliged to admit that a system which proposed to secure equal advantages to all, to abolish tyranny, oppression, poverty, ignorance, crime, and paid vice was at least intensely moral, and ideally Christian.*

This fact excited the disgust of the so-called "religious world" to an extent which was quite surprising. A large proportion of this section of society openly relied for its influence on mere wealth, sectarian cant, and noisy professions of personal piety, while it combined every conceivable rascality in trade, business, or profession, with ostentatious almsgiving, mechanical philanthropy, and fussy obtrusiveness in congregational organisation. Nothing ever exasperated it more than to find a system put forward which reversed every actual motive of its life, while resting on the very foundation which it claimed to monopolise. That a programme aiming at the destruction of all their fetishes should be the expression of an ethical formula by which they professed to be guided was a thing not to be forgiven by the modern Pharisees; and as it could not be attacked by argument, it was made the subject of impudent misrepresentation.

A favorite device of certain theologians was adopted, and the new doctrine was anathematised as being (of all things in the world) immoral and irreligious; the reformers were denounced as "materialistic"; they were bent on making people so comfortable that "spirituality" would disappear, and mankind

* Or perhaps we should say, Christlike—a term perfectly adapted to meet the objections of those who were accustomed to revile Collectivism as utterly unchristian.

would no longer look to a future state to redress the intolerable evils of the present one. It was said that honesty and virtue, arising merely from the absence of temptation to theft and vice, were worthless; that the altruistic emotions would starve for lack of indulgence; that philanthropy, almsgiving, and the patronising of the poor would become extinct. All of which being translated meant, if it meant anything, that a hell upon earth was to be kept up in order to afford an odd Dives here and there the sentimental luxury of allowing his dogs to lick the sores of Lazarus—or not, as he felt disposed.

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Another element of hostility was found, curiously enough, in the numberless societies devoted to charitable, protective, and reformatory objects.

It was recognised that organised efforts (*e.g.*) for the suppression of vice would have little scope when prostitution for the sake of a living had been extinguished by assignment to every female citizen of an adequate income. Magdalen and similar institutions for the fallen would be needless when no woman need starve because she was virtuous. All the machinery for obtaining support to hospitals, infirmaries, maternity charities, convalescent homes, dispensaries, orphanages, almshouses, benevolent, sick, and accident funds, &c., would become obsolete when the community charged itself with the health as well as the maintenance of its members.

The various temperance associations saw clearly that with the assumption by the State of the sole right of selling intoxicants, nine-tenths of the existing artificially stimulated consumption would cease. The incentives to brutalising and fatal excess arising from the unspeakable squalor, discomfort, and misery among whole sections of the poorer classes, would evidently disappear under an equal distribution of the necessities and comforts of life; and the general access to all kinds of public amusement and recreation, without charge or restriction, would alone remove one of the most active causes of intemperance.

Drink would cease to be thrust on the passer-by at every few yards, and the drink-seller would no longer be interested in the quantity of liquor sold. Not only would the average buyer of drink enjoy many physical comforts, previously unknown to him, but the ignorant, stupid, and solitary members of the community would no longer be driven to the public-house as their sole opportunity for society and enjoyment. They could enter at will (when their regulation day's work was over) any one of the innumerable places of amusement carried on for the benefit of the citizens, whether theatre, music-hall, circus, concert, band promenade, or what not. The residuum of habitual drunkards, under these conditions, would become so small as to permit of being dealt with as a perfectly simple matter of police ; and the excuse for the existence of the great societies for promoting temperance would be at an end.

Similarly the advocates of peasant proprietorship, of leasehold enfranchisement, and of national insurance, the champions of women's rights, the Liberation Society, the trade-protection associations, and numberless other bodies saw their occupation gone under the new régime. The agencies for the protection of women, children, and dumb animals, for the reformation of outcasts and discharged prisoners, &c., still discerned some probable scope for their action under the proposed order of things; but the main body of social reformers and philanthropists recognised that the success of State Industrialism meant the accomplishment through its instrumentality of all the objects for which they were striving. In brief, the one great reform would include of necessity all the lesser ones.

This very obvious fact was sufficient to secure for the Phalanx programme the open or disguised jealousy and ill-will of all those prominently associated with the interests above detailed. The enormous majority of the directorates or staffs of the various philanthropic and reformatory societies consisted of people whose adherence was dictated by the love of fuss, notoriety, and self-glorification, stimulated by sectarian competition and antagonism, together with a host of officials who

were interested in the continued existence of the associations whose finances they manipulated, and whose salaries they received. Neither of these classes could be expected to sympathise with a scheme whose success would deprive them of prestige and patronage; and accordingly noble chairmen, influential committee-men, and indefatigable treasurers and secretaries displayed a remarkable unanimity in ignoring or pooh-poohing the Phalanx and its proposals.

The different view taken, however, by their subscribers we shall record later.

CHAPTER II.

So FAR we have indicated aspects of criticism directed to the new scheme as a whole. There were, however, one or two special points of detail which met with opposition, and we may here enumerate them.

It was somewhat curious that the one feature in the programme of the Phalanx respecting which no real debate was possible, did, as a matter of fact, excite more hesitation and complaint, even amongst sympathisers with the theory of Collectivism, than any other. This was the provision that the national income should be equally divided amongst the citizens.

"What!" cried the objectors, "the slow, the stupid, the lazy, the ignorant, the clever, the learned, the ingenious, the industrious—all to be rewarded alike? The easiest, the most unskilled, and the most mechanical service to be as well paid as the most arduous, the most highly trained, or the most intellectual? That will never do."

To which it was responded that, whatever might be the case in theory, in practice no other arrangement would have the slightest chance of being adopted. Quite obviously there were only two means of adjusting wages to work on any basis of

apparent or real desert—one being Competition, and the other Omniscience. As Competition was the very thing to be abolished, and Omniscience was not available, the only alternative was absolute equality—the automatic adjustment of hours to occupation being of course borne in mind.

Apart from this, it was clear that when the power of dividing the income of the nation fell to the whole community (as was quite inevitable in any case, whether sooner or later), the people of average capacity would continue, as before, enormously to outnumber the gifted exceptions. The latter would thus be powerless to obtain any extra advantage unless it were freely and voluntarily conceded to them by their less able or energetic fellow citizens ; while such a concession in the shape of increased money reward would almost certainly be refused, on account of its tendency to perpetuate some of the worst evils of Individualism.

A further consideration of importance was the train of consequences likely to follow any attempt of the State or local organisers of industry to devise varying rates of remuneration, either for individuals or for occupations. If one result of such an enterprise might be predicted with more certainty than any other, it would be that an enormous majority would be dissatisfied with the wages accorded to themselves, while the minority would be equally dissatisfied with those paid to other people. Probably the same thing could be said of the same persons under the existing system ; but under that system the malcontents had only the option of starving, while under the new régime they would control the whole industrial administration of the country. It was true that formerly they could, if they chose, dignify their starvation by the name of "strike," and now and then improve matters by that kind of protest. But under Collectivism a strike would not be a protest—it would be a revolution.

From another point of view, it was obvious that inasmuch as every arrangement for varying wages made by the departments responsible therefor would be certain to be found fault with,

those departments would prefer to be attacked in as few directions as possible. They would thus arrive at the conclusion that it was easier to defend a hundred decisions than a thousand, and easiest of all to defend only one. This last would be, of course, to pay all exactly alike, leaving the malcontents to prove to the public that it was unfair in their own particular cases. The average citizen might then be trusted to discover that general equality was a most equitable arrangement for every one except (perhaps) himself personally. This view would be equivalent to resenting any expression of discontent from other people, and would thus militate against organised opposition of an effective kind.

Finally, it was scarcely necessary to point out that whatever might be the merits of any scheme of differentiated wages under State Industrialism, it could only be enforced by a military despotism. As this machinery was no part of the Collectivist programme, further arguments in favour of equal division of income were uncalled for.*

"But," complained the critics, "it can never be right to deprive energy, talent, and character of the natural reward and incentive of their exertions."

It was replied that, unfortunately, the existing system did little else but permit energy, talent, and more especially character, to be daily and hourly deprived of "the natural reward and incentive of their exertions" (if a money-payment were meant thereby) through chicane, fraud, law, competition,

* Rather curiously, the whole tendency of Trade-Union effort, towards the end of the nineteenth century, was directed towards securing this very same equal wage for equal or *unequal* work—although the motive was not in the least that of sympathy with Collectivism. It was, in reality, an attack on the system under which the extra energy, skill, or speed of particular workmen in particular occupations was always liable to be utilised by the employers, not to raise the wages of the exceptional workmen, but to lower those of the average ones. In piece-work trades, for instance, the highest possible rate of turn-out in a given time was certain, sooner or later, to be treated by the employer as the normal standard, to the disadvantage of all those unable to reach it.

and the despotism of capital ; and this alone was an amply sufficient reason for its supersession. But, apart from this, the objection could readily be shown to be based upon a most imperfect and careless view of the motives actually underlying the struggle for wealth under an Individualist régime.

Men fought for money in the first place to obtain present necessities, comforts, and luxuries for themselves and their families ; in the second, to make sure of these benefits in the future by means of accumulation.

These advantages secured, very many men, and almost all women, sought further riches, not so much to add to their own personal comfort or luxury as to exercise tyranny, and by parade and ostentation to excite a satisfactory degree of envy and jealousy amongst their acquaintances.

Finally, in an immense proportion of cases the extremes of wealth were accompanied by an almost unlimited readiness to throw that wealth away in order thereby to acquire distinction, prominence, or notoriety before the public. Rich men paid away their money in purchasing utterly unremunerative landed estates, in subscriptions to charities, in the building or endowing of institutions, the gifts of collections, galleries, parks, &c., the securing of dominant positions in local administrative officedom, and the buying of their way into Parliament and the peerage, for nothing else but the yearning for notoriety.

In all these cases, the ultimate reward of exertion, or capacity, or ambition (whether meritorious or otherwise), was avowedly *not* money, but something for which money, however arduously earned, was to be lavished and almost recklessly sacrificed.

In view of these facts, it was self-evident that the existing highest ultimate reward of exceptional effort or capacity, viz. distinction—distinction as yet only made possible by the previous earning of wealth—would under Collectivism not only be still open to the ambitious, but would be obtainable directly, and without the intervention of the money-making process. The two first rewards of exertion above-mentioned, present

comfort and future security, would be secured by the system itself. The tyranny of wealth-power and the malice of ostentation would be extinguished. The "reward of energy, talent, and character" would therefore of necessity take the shape of that public distinction which was already thought worth buying at a heavy cost. Under a changed régime it could not be bought at all, and would have to be secured by the exhibition of skill, integrity, perseverance, and success in the public service.

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A further objection was often expressed as follows—"The present industrial system has its defects, but it certainly has one immense advantage which would be forfeited under Collectivism—it tends to elicit to their utmost the talents and energies alike of employers and employed."

Of this amazing statement we need only say that it showed, perhaps more clearly than any other argument used by Individualists, the extent to which the canker of huckstering and wealth-worship had eaten into the very heart of nineteenth century civilisation.

Certain talents and energies *were*, unhappily, "elicited to the utmost" by the profit-mongering system; but they were only the talents and energies that ensured success in money-grubbing. These were of necessity the most active agents in vulgarising and debasing the manners, minds, and lives of those distinguished by their possession.

Every kind of talent and energy except such as was directly conducive to business success was either discouraged, crushed, or extinguished by the Individualist régime. All the endowments or attainments which go to make up the type of citizen at once the happiest and best for his own best self, and the most useful and agreeable to his fellows, were sacrificed to the single object of "getting on."

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As a matter of fact, the routine objections wherewith we are now dealing arose in almost every case from sheer inability on the part of the objectors to project the imagination into a

social state in which not only comfort and leisure but security for the future would be the privilege of every citizen who performed his simple duty; in which wealth could buy no unfair advantage; in which every worker would be free to become, not a money-making machine, but a man; and in which, by the mere operation of the régime itself, the man as a man would be everything, and his purse simply nothing whatever.

This paucity of the imaginative faculty was undoubtedly one of the most formidable of the difficulties with which the reformers had to reckon. In face of it, the employment of argument as regards a large section of the public was rendered almost entirely useless through the absence of anything upon which it could be brought to bear. "Against stupidity," as Schiller wrote, "the gods themselves fight unvictorious"; and the Collectivists would have been sanguine indeed had they expected to be more successful.

But it is gratifying to recollect that even in the nineteenth century there were minds which could perceive some higher ideal of reward for special services to the community than the chance of "making a pot of money," and could teach that

"THE DAY WILL COME WHEN IT WILL BE RECOGNISED THAT EACH ONE'S DEBT TO HIS FELLOW-MEN IS IN PROPORTION TO THE STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE HE HAS RECEIVED FROM GOD; AND IT WILL BE A PART WORTHY OF GENIUS TO ASSERT ITS LEGITIMATE EMPIRE, NOT BY THE AMOUNT OF THE TRIBUTE IT WILL LEVY ON SOCIETY, BUT BY THE GREATNESS OF THE SERVICE IT WILL RENDER TO IT."*

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A more reasonable comment on the suggested equality of payment or income was one that frequently took some such shape as the following:

"Your proposal," it was said, "makes no provision for the acquisition of wealth by superior energy, ingenuity, or industry. Whatever might be a man's needs or desires of a

* Louis Blanc.

perfectly unobjectionable character, he could by no efforts of his own secure the wherewithal to satisfy them if they involved extra expenditure; he would find no opportunity to become rich by legitimate means, but must be content with the general average."

The reply to this was that no man ever did, or could, become rich by "legitimate means," (*i.e.*) *by his own unaided labour.** Wealth never meant or could mean anything but the plunder of other people's brains or industry. Even the wealthy physician or artist was only a sharer in plunder at second-hand —his patients or patrons must have plundered in order that his big fees or high prices should be paid to him.

Under State Industrialism the uniform credit-allowance would be a return for the regulation day's work. But nothing would in the least prevent any individual working as long as he liked at the pro rata allowance, either at his regular occupation or any other, always provided the opportunity existed.

For instance, if the rate of volunteering had settled four hours a day as the regulation day's work for a worker, he could, if he chose, double his income by working eight hours a day. There would be very few cases in which this opportunity could not be afforded him, inasmuch as the policy of the State would be to increase production, not to diminish it. But no other means of increasing income would be either possible or desirable, because they could only imply in some form or other that *exploitation of other people's labour or brains* which was the fundamental curse of Individualism, and which it was the object of Collectivism to destroy for ever.

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In connection with the proposals for the income status of women there was, for a time, a certain slowness in grasping their bearing on the all-important question of domestic service or household assistance. Many persons who fully recognised the necessity of the complete emancipation of women and the

* Except perhaps a dozen popular actors and singers in a century.

placing of them on a position of absolute equality with men as regards rights and privileges, were at a loss to see how help in the household and nursery could possibly be forthcoming, if all women without exception were provided with an income without being obliged to work for it. At the same time this help would be imperatively required in the immense majority of homes, if they were to present any features of comfort.

A little reflection, however, showed that the difficulty alluded to existed only in appearance. If it were arranged that women should receive their crédit-allowance on the same terms as the men, they would thereby become State employés. They could then only be engaged through the State, and would of course each cost the private employer per annum just the private employer's own income.

For example, if Mrs. Brown (whose credit-income would be the regulation full share, which we will call *x*) wished to engage as nursemaid Miss Smith (whose credit, if she were a State employé, would also be *x*), the State would say: "If Miss Smith consents, we will transfer her services from ourselves to you; but *you* must pay her credit of *x* instead of us, as she will no longer be a State employé."

Now, if Mrs. Brown's family were a large one (*i.e.* if the family income consisted of several *x's* and children's two-thirds of *x* clubbed together) this arrangement might be a practicable one. But if the large family included several adult girls, or children old enough to be useful, it would be precisely the one where the assistance in question would be the least required. The most urgent need of help would arise in the smallest households, where there were, say, a mother and two babies, an invalid husband, or an aged parent or relative. Here the sacrifice of one full share out of the two or three shares making up the joint income would be attended with great difficulty; while in the case of solitary individuals, choosing or compelled to live alone without family or companions, it would of course be impossible.

On the other hand, the provision by which women were divided into effectives and non-effectives offered a solution of the difficulty. The former class would be almost of necessity engaged in services of distribution, teaching, &c., and as recipients of full income would be practically unavailable for domestic assistance. The natural and constitutional aversion of women to business occupations away from home would lead to an enormous preponderance of the second class—the non-effectives—over the first, throughout the kingdom. The income of this latter class would of course be only two-thirds of the regulation credit, while the State would claim no service from it. The result would be that the mere offer of board and lodging, or even of board only, would tempt into domestic service (or rather "help") many of those women who would wish to allot to dress and other matters that portion of their two-thirds credit which would otherwise be spent in maintenance. In a large proportion of cases the conversion of women into "ladies of independent means" would thus have the effect of rendering assistance in domestic matters cheaper under the new régime than under the old one.

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It may be remarked that the suggestion to provide an income for all female citizens, whether they rendered service or not (although in the latter case the amount was proposed to be one-third less than in the former), was received by a certain order of men, and by the great bulk of well-to-do women, with a dislike which was sometimes rendered almost venomous by the difficulties in the way of avowing the true reasons for their hostility.

The men saw that the whole machinery for the indulgence of vice was liable to be extinguished, through the improbability that even a vestige of prostitution would remain when that career ceased to be the only alternative to starvation. The "ladies" recognised that if they were to obtain assistance at all in domestic matters, it would no longer be from "persons"

whom they could treat as belonging to an absolutely separate and inferior species of human beings to themselves, who had no claim to be considered as anything but human automata, and who could be made to feel that betwixt drawing-room and kitchen a gulf was fixed as impassable as that between Lazarus and Dives. On the contrary, it would have to be secured as a mutual convenience between equal contracting parties, and made the occasion for that courtesy, kindness, and consideration which could alone permit of the proferred assistance being prolonged or permanent.

As these reasons for hating Collectivism fell a good deal short of what could be openly avowed, an attempt was frequently made to represent the optional exemption from compulsory service as a distinction insulting to women, and a prolongation of the old status of inferiority to the male sex. It was a condemning of women to the curse of idleness and to the mental deterioration following their exclusion from careers open to men. It was a degrading limitation of their interests and faculties to the mechanical drudgery of domestic routine, &c.

To this tardy conversion to the views of the Women's Rights advocates the Phalanxists had only to reply that their proposals gave every woman perfect liberty to follow any career she chose on precisely the same footing as a man, and accorded precisely the same privileges in return.

But the really practical argument for the complete economic freedom of women lay in the fact, that under Collectivism there would be a universal refusal on the part of parents to permit their daughters to be thrown into the promiscuous society and associations which would be inseparable from any State industrial organisation whatever. To say nothing of the possible necessity for occasionally despatching the State employés to posts or places remote from their homes, it would be quite impracticable in most branches of industry to exercise that discrimination which alone would reconcile heads of families to subject their female relatives to constant and unavoidable intercourse with persons of both sexes, who might be

not only undesirable, but highly objectionable acquaintances. This single consideration would have entirely neutralised any arguments in favour of compulsory female service, had they existed.

To those dissatisfied persons who continued to object on principle to the clause assigning a two-thirds income to women, free from the obligation to undertake any career at all, it only remained to propound the very obvious dogma "that a community which compelled any of its women to work for the means of living had not even commenced to be civilised"; and to suggest that persons to whom this truism was unacceptable were distinctly beyond the reach of appeals, either to reason, to chivalry, or to humanity.

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Very little hostile criticism was incurred by the provisions of Clause V. (Free Privileges) of the Phalanx programme. It was obvious that in the case of all services to the public as distinguished from the individual (services which, if rendered at all, must be rendered *en bloc*), no object would be gained by taking the public money, or its equivalent, out of one pocket merely to put it into another. No man could abuse the right to travel by bus, tram, or train, or to enter a theatre or concert-room. He could only occupy one seat at a time in a conveyance or place of amusement. He would not fall ill or break his leg if he could help it. He would not write needless letters, send needless parcels, or wire needless telegrams, merely because it cost nothing. It was intended and expected that every citizen would use transport if it was necessary or convenient to him; that he would occupy his leisure in libraries, museums, or places of public recreation; that he would correspond with his family and friends; and that he would keep himself in health. If the whole community did this, it was absurd to ask the community to pay itself for what it did, as the only result would be to waste the time of an army of ticket-clerks, cheque-takers, fee-receivers, collectors and inspectors for nothing at all. The case

was of course totally different with questions of personal and domestic supply, the purchase of provisions, goods and chattels, &c. ; and in these respects the adjustment of the individual's income to his special wants was evidently a matter for special personal transaction.

* * *

With regard to free State education, it is true that there was an occasional reappearance of the fine old crusted objections that the obligation of providing for the teaching and training of children was one devolving upon "the authors of their being" ; that it was a violation of parental duty to delegate the fulfilment of it to any external authority ; and that it was an outrage that any man should be called upon to furnish means for the education of other people's progeny.

The objectors required to be periodically silenced (if not convinced) by the obvious truisms, that it was perfectly immaterial whether a man provided for the teaching of his family by paying school fees directly, or taxes for education indirectly, and that all parents who could not personally teach their children, were of necessity bound to delegate the duty to some one else ; while in each case all the advantages of economy and efficiency were likely to be on the side of a responsible public department.

As regards the objection to share in the general cost of national education, this arose largely, no doubt, from an inability to see that apart from any question of humanity, it was distinctly to the advantage of the community, and of every individual composing it, that the inconveniences, annoyances, and dangers of a class growing up in brutal ignorance through its poverty should be entirely removed.

In addition to all this there was, among the elder generation, a curiously late survival of the old slave-owning and slave-driving traditions that "the three R's were good enough for the poor," that anything more "unfitted them for their proper station," and that "no good ever came of treating the lower

orders like ladies and gentlemen." In active sympathy with these were the army of sectarians of various denominations, who fought for the maintenance of clerical despotism, and a large number of most excellent and truly pious persons who had yet to learn that anything worthy of being called "religious education" was less a matter of precept than of example, and that no advance on purely pagan superstition could be expected while people conceived it to be a man's business to save himself by his creed rather than to save others by his life.

To these latter opponents the Phalanxists had only to reply that under a complete Collectivist Commonwealth the so-called "religious difficulty" would be simply non-existent, and that Anglicans, Dissenters, Catholics, and Secularists alike would as a matter of course be able to make for themselves precisely what educational arrangements they chose—a prediction whose entire fulfilment we shall detail in its proper place. For the rest, neither "poor," nor "proper stations" (in the genteel sense), nor "lower orders," would have any existence in a co-operative community.

The suggestion that British agriculture should be developed to a point sufficient to render us independent of foreign food imports brought to light an extraordinary and almost incredible ignorance of our national resources in this connection. For a generation and a half, the vicious system of destroying our home agriculture, in order to develop a manufacturing slavery, enormously profitable to a few employers, had become a recognised national policy. This had been carried on so vigorously and continuously, that a large number of otherwise well-informed people had grown up more or less imbued with the idea that this country was unable to produce sufficient food for its population, and that a foreign market for our manufactures, in order to pay for imported food, was a necessity.

Such persons were quite surprised to be told that not only were imports of foreign food* (other than tropical and sub-tropical products, such as tea, coffee, and sugar), wholly unnecessary, but that this country could with ease support three or four times its present population. What the Individualist régime had done in the way of destroying British agriculture could be partially realised from the facts that we had 19,000,000 acres of arable land in 1831, and only 16,484,000 in 1891; that in 1857 we had 4,213,651 acres under wheat, and only 2,219,839 in 1892; and that while in 1841 we grew food enough for 24,280,000 of our population, by 1880 we had come to grow food for only 12,150,000.† Even in the case of wheat alone, it could be shown that whereas we imported at this time, according to circumstances, from twice to thrice as much as the home production,‡ there was no real occasion to depend on foreign supplies at all. Fifty years before, we had produced double the present yield of wheat, and that that yield could be increased by more than 50 per cent. (through improved methods of cultivation) had long been demonstrated by experiment.§ As regards the general food production, it had to be recollected that only 33,000,000 acres out of a total of 77,600,000 were under any sort of culture at all (including permanent pastures, woods, and plantations),‖ and that even the 16,484,000 acres of arable land were only made to yield an average of £5 10s. 0d.

* Amounting in 1889 to £141,019,765; in 1891 to £148,027,269, besides £22,389,318 of barley, oats, maize, &c. (Government Returns).

† Agricultural Returns; Tract 6, English Land Restoration League. The ratio between home and imported food was in 1855, 86 per cent. and 14; in 1892, 26·8 and 73·2 (Lawes).

‡ In 1888, 17,490,376 qrs. imported against 8,010,447 qrs. home grown; in 1892, 22,830,421 qrs. against 8,358,514 qrs. home grown. (Returns.)

§ The following figures (for 1885) indicate the results of varying modes of cultivation:

Table of wheat produced per statute acre in bushels.—English average 26, maximum 60; Lawes's average 36, maximum 55; Allotment average 40, maximum 57.—("Land and Labourer," Rev. C. W. Stubbs.)—Taking even the highest English farmers' average (39¾ in 1864), it will be seen how considerably this falls below the maximum wheat-producing capacity of the soil.

‖ Government Returns, 1891.

per acre, instead of the £150 to £250 which was an average return in market gardening.* The opening for increased production was thus obvious; and it was estimated on the very best authority that the increase could be made to reach without any difficulty the value of £421,000,000 per annum,† which, added to the existing home yield, would support a population of 90,087,800.‡

But while the practicability of a development of home agriculture, to a point immeasurably beyond any possible requirement of the population for a century at least, was well known to all persons conversant with the subject, the policy of making this country independent of foreign food was by no means universally approved. Many thoroughgoing Collectivists protested that it would be utterly false economy to raise food here at a great cost of labour and fertilisers, when it could be purchased at a fourth of the price abroad.§ They argued that instead of

* Mechi ("How to Farm Profitably").

† Mechi (Hoyle's "Resources of the British Empire").

‡ "If the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated only as it *was* thirty years ago, 24,000,000 people instead of 17,000,000 could live on home-grown food; and that culture, while giving occupation to at least 750,000 men, would give nearly 3,000,000 wealthy home customers to the British manufacturers. If the acres on which wheat was grown thirty years ago—only these, and not more—were cultivated as the fields are cultivated now in England under the allotment system, which gives on the average forty bushels per acre, the United Kingdom would grow food for 27,000,000 inhabitants out of 35,000,000. If the now cultivated area of the United Kingdom (80,000 square miles) were cultivated as the soil is cultivated *on the average* in Belgium, the United Kingdom would have food for 37,000,000 inhabitants; and it might export agricultural produce, without ceasing to manufacture so as freely to supply all the needs of a wealthy population. And finally, if the population of this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing the food for 70,000,000 inhabitants would be to cultivate the soil as it is cultivated in the best farms of this country, in Lombardy, and in Flanders, and to cultivate the meadows which at present lie almost unproductive around the big cities in the same way as the neighbourhoods of Paris are cultivated by the Paris *Maraichers*. All these are not not fancy dreams, but mere realities; nothing but modest conclusions from what we see round about us, without any allusion to the agriculture of the future."—PRINCE KROPOTKIN on "The Coming Reign of Plenty."—*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1888.

§ The spot price of wheat in Asia Minor was even less than this, and the wheat-growing capabilities of that part of the world were practically unlimited.

studied isolation the genius of Collectivism favoured the widest and freest exchange of products amongst the nations, just in proportion as circumstances admitted of relatively cheaper production. To abandon our control of foreign markets for manufactures, in order to revert to the position of a food-growing country, would therefore be to sacrifice our strongest point in favour of our weakest.

To these arguments the Phalanxists had only to reply that so long as nations were liable to be roused to paroxysms of jealousy and rage by race prejudices, popular passion, the intrigues of political or military adventurers, the canards of the stock-jobbing press, or the unscrupulous tactics of despotic governments, no country could afford to place the feeding of its population at the mercy of a local or general war. While universal peace, brotherhood, and common sense were most admirable and desirable things *per se*, the chances of seeing them prevail amongst "civilised" mankind were too remote to be worth considering. Until they did prevail, the present position of this country in regard to its food supplies was unsatisfactory and dangerous in the highest degree. It caused our whole foreign and colonial policy to be hampered and perverted by considerations of markets, tariffs, and reciprocal concessions, to an extent which distinctly qualified our national independence, and made all questions of honour and even of decency subservient to the single desideratum of securing or retaining foreign customers for British manufactures.

In fact, the monopoly by our territorial aristocracy of the national soil, and the support accorded thereto by the capitalist party, had reduced Great Britain from the middle of the nineteenth century till the Revolution, to the most abject position ever endured by any great nation not actually under the heel of a foreign conqueror. This country was absolutely at the mercy of two or three wheat-producing states and colonies; it was never provided with more than two months' food in advance; and the population was liable to be literally exterminated by a few weeks' alliance between two of the

foreign states which hated us, or of the colonies which despised us. The national existence hung on the single thread of the greater or less degree of Protectionist or Chauvinist policy prevailing amongst a group of communities with whom we were either periodically wrangling, or on the verge of war ; and it was kept thus hanging by a political faction which bragged everlastingly of its patriotism, its Imperial policy, its devotion to the prestige of England, and its exclusive recognition of the grandeur of our country's mission.

Quite apart, however, from all this, many Collectivists held that the conversion of Great Britain into the cotton factory or ironworks of the whole world was the very last thing to be aimed at or tolerated. The national comfort and happiness was to be sought in precisely the opposite direction. Health of mind and body for the citizens would be secured just in proportion as the gloom and the filth of the mine, the roar of the blast furnace, and the everlasting whirr of the mill were exchanged for the plough and the spade, the fresh air and the green fields, and the health and vigour of a life spent in the open country. All who sympathised with these views necessarily supported the programme of the Phalanx, and averred that if only for its policy with regard to the soil, it deserved the adherence of all interested in the real welfare of the nation.

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The proposal to prohibit foreign pauper immigration was the subject of some misconception. Surprise was expressed that, under a system in which competition would have no place, obstacles should be placed in the way of adding to the working strength of the nation, seeing that additional producers could only mean additional production, and hence increased wealth for the community. A very natural reluctance was also entertained to shut our gates for the first time upon those unhappy fugitives from foreign lands, for whom Britain had been for so long the one secure and unfailing asylum.

It was of course pointed out that the proposal did not apply to political refugees, while in favour of the clause there were two unanswerable arguments, either of which would alone have been sufficient to justify the suggested restriction.

In the first place, the Collectivist régime would have for its very foremost object the gradual extinction of the ignorant, debased, and brutalised sections of our own population, by a method of levelling up which would tax the energy, patience, and perseverance of the community to the utmost. A long and arduous process of education, sanitation, and general training would be required to raise the children and younger generations of the existing lower classes even to the threshold of the standard of middle-class decency, culture, and refinement. All such efforts would be rendered utterly nugatory if we were to remain, as heretofore, the recipients of a ceaseless deluge of the very dregs of continental pauperism—a deluge, moreover, which would be subject to infinite expansion by reason of the very conditions into which Great Britain had entered. Our country would become the sink of all Europe, and the same elements we were laboriously striving to eliminate from our native population would be renewed year by year in ever-increasing numbers from foreign shores.

The second argument was a somewhat different one. It was evident that the stream of alien paupers in question consisted of sufferers from the very same evils under foreign social conditions which we should be endeavouring to extinguish at home, aggravated and intensified by every vice of religious intolerance, official corruption, and administrative tyranny. Any arrangements by which the false social and economical systems obtaining abroad should be enabled to dispose of their victims, would simply have the effect of perpetuating those systems, of delaying the redemption of the communities they oppressed, and of minimising the educational effect of the revolution in these islands.

On the other hand the proposed policy would compel the social and political jobbers and despots abroad to face the results of their maladministration, and to deal with the con-

sequent ever-present poverty, sullen discontent, and smouldering sedition, by depriving them of the convenient safety-valve of emigration. This would all tend to precipitate that upheaval of the down-trodden masses which could only end in their complete emancipation on the democratic and co-operative lines of State Industrialism.

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The foregoing presentation of the pros and cons in relation to various details of the Phalanx programme will probably give an adequate idea of the general discussion on the subject, so far as we are concerned with what, by any stretch of courtesy, could be called argument. But there was a polemical resource open to the enemies of Collectivism which did not call either for facts, reasoning, or prophecy, and was on that account a favourite one with the large majority of bigoted Individualists. This was the resource of more or less wilful misrepresentation.

"The advocates of Collectivism," it was said, "aim at making all men equal, regardless of the mental, physical, and physiological differences between individuals which have always existed, and must always exist. They hate superiority of every kind, and wish to drag the whole race down to a dead level of hopeless mediocrity. They intend to have a cast-iron despotism of social life, customs, habits, education, and occupation, which, if ever put in practice, will extinguish all mental energy or activity, and reduce men to the condition of soulless machines. They aim directly at destroying liberty, religion, the family, and the purity of women, in order to substitute the worship of Reason and the habits of savages."

As regards these statements, we need say little more than that the facts happened to be notoriously in the exactly opposite direction.

No Collectivist ever aimed at making men equal, ever thought it was possible, or ever supposed it would be of the slightest advantage if it were possible.

What Collectivists insisted upon was equality of rights, privileges, and opportunities—opportunities for real superiority in every department of intellectual endowment or attainment to show itself, to take its merited place, and to assist in developing those endless aspects of originality and independence in art, letters, invention, industrial and social life, which the old régime took such infinite pains to crush and to destroy.

Collectivists aimed at securing every phase of personal, social, political, and religious liberty; at making real family life for the first time possible to millions of the community; and at opening the door of true womanhood to hosts without number of the lost, degraded and almost unsexed mothers, sisters, and daughters of the nation.

In brief, they sought to realize for every man, woman, and child the utmost health and comfort, the highest moral, intellectual, and physical development, the widest and noblest freedom possible to the human race.

CHAPTER III.

The effect of the Phalanx programme upon the general public was limited, and for a time somewhat discouraging, as the movement appealed more to the really thinking portion of the community than to the masses, whether cultured or uncultured. The Professors of Political Economy at the Universities being nearly all avowed Collectivists, the undergraduates furnished, as might have been expected, numerous adherents to the League; while the classes concerned in education sympathised heartily. The army of professional amusers of the public, actors, musicians, performers of every kind and species, saw a golden age in the new régime; but the hosts of slaves of the desk and counter conspicuously failed to grasp the bearing of the programme on their own economic position.

The attitude of the old-fashioned Trade-Union officials and labour representatives in Parliament continued to be uniformly hostile to Collectivism in any shape, and the reasons for this open treachery to the interests of their order have never been very clearly explained. Their habitual and avowed preference for strikes over legislation as a means for securing advantages to their members was frequently asserted to be the result of systematic bribery on the part of the Tory and Capitalist party and of the great employers—by the former in order to divert the workers' attention from social reform and to prevent them discovering the power they could exercise in Parliament if they chose, and by the latter in order to impoverish the Unions while the employers were selling off accumulations of stock.* But while there was a widespread suspicion that most of the great strikes were arranged by a corrupt bargain between the Union officials and the capitalist syndicates (the profits of the latter rendering even the rise in wages resulting from a successful strike a matter of little moment), no satisfactory evidence in proof of this was ever forthcoming. Although there was more probability in the theory that the Tory wirepullers supported the strike funds on condition that the labour leaders should hold aloof from Parliamentary attacks on property and privilege, there is nevertheless much left to be accounted for in the policy adopted by the Trade-Union officials towards the proletariat interests.

From whatever motive, however, the older leaders of the working classes obstructed the progress of Collectivism with all the means at their disposal. This brought them increasingly into collision with those more enlightened and far-seeing members of the proletariat who laboured, with unrivalled ability and energy, to popularise Collectivist principles and a Collectivist programme amongst their fellows through the agency of what were known as the "New Unionism" and the "Independent Labour Party." The rank and file of the artisans had not only everything to gain and nothing to

* As for instance in the coal and cotton strikes of 1892-3-4.

lose by the proposed changes, but actually possessed at the moment ample power to carry them into effect whenever they chose. Nevertheless they regarded the new movement with utter apathy; and afforded thereby probably the most remarkable illustration of impenetrable class stupidity on record.

The reception of the programme by the clergy varied considerably. The higher ecclesiastics being mostly connected with, or protégés of, the great landowners, were interested through their families in the perpetuation of all class privileges and abuses. They were naturally tenacious of their caste superiority, and were in consequence bitterly opposed to the social levelling-up which was the ultimate aim of the Collectivist policy. The Dissenting ministers, with a few lucky exceptions, were too entirely under the domination of the wealthy church-members and subscribers, who had waxed fat on the worst abuses of the Individualist system, to be able to express any free opinion on the matter. The High-Church Anglicans, and the immense majority of the hardworked and underpaid curates and incumbents of the Establishment, were more or less in sympathy with the Phalanx from the first; and eventually, as they came to understand its proposals better, associated themselves with it almost to a man.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church was at the outset one of reserve, although individual clerical and lay sympathy was not wanting. The later action of the hierarchy we shall deal with in its proper place.

Those members of the two aristocracies of rank and wealth, the plunderers of the land and of the proletariat, who were not furiously hostile to the new programme, treated it as one of those harmless and amusing eccentricities for which a free country must now and then find warehouse-room, and in their serene security scarcely troubled themselves to express the stereotyped opinion that the reformers deserved hanging. The smaller fry of the commercial and shopkeeping classes appear to have ignored the whole subject altogether.

For the rest we need only say that few organisations ever existed whose initial resources were so out of proportion to the results eventually obtained as were those of the Phalanx at the period referred to. Its propaganda was started without funds, without eminent leaders, without noisy advertisement, without appeal to political partisanship, to sectarian jealousy, to caste prejudice, or to popular passion. It brought to a focus every element hostile to the true welfare of the State and of the citizen, and was received with almost utter indifference by the bulk of the classes it was chiefly designed to benefit.

Probably no movement had ever previously succeeded in threatening so many vested interests, in attacking so many abuses, or in arousing so many enemies, and yet in its inception had so few friends. Its complete ultimate triumph, within so short a space of time, was owing to a single circumstance, and that alone ; namely, that *the changes it proposed were inevitable and imminent, and no wit of man could prevent or even seriously delay them.*

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The measures adopted by the Phalanx leaders and their followers to popularise their views, and the programme of the League amongst the general public, included probably every method of propaganda that enthusiasm or ingenuity could devise. But the main lines of operation, apart from the use of the press and the periodical publications of the day, were four in number.

The first was the distribution of Collectivist literature (in the shape of tracts, leaflets, pamphlets, &c.), and the delivery of Collectivist lectures, wherever and whenever opportunity offered ; and in the case of the lectures it was uniformly sought to add to their interest by inviting discussion and criticism from opponents on each occasion.

In the second place, the Phalanx Council urged upon the friends of the movement to exert themselves to form branches in the various parliamentary and municipal constituencies; and

if possible to secure an aggregate membership sufficiently large to render it an element necessary to be reckoned with either in general or local elections.

Thirdly, members were called upon to use every influence in pressing forward the adoption of actual Collectivist operations by municipal and other public authorities wherever possible.

Finally, all Collectivists were exhorted to lose no opportunity of "capturing" the various political associations, and of securing seats upon the local elective bodies (such as Borough and County Councils, Local Boards, School Boards, Vestries, Guardians, &c.) in all available directions.

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The two first methods of propaganda were of course intimately connected, and one frequently arose out of the other. Opportunities for the distribution of popular Collectivist literature, either by way of sale or gift, were afforded most readily by the delivery of lectures (nearly always free) on Collectivist subjects. These lectures, and the spread of literature (aided by the incidental discussions), frequently led to the formation of local branches of Phalanx sympathisers, in alliance with the central body. On the other hand, when supporters of the new programme united to form a local branch of the Phalanx, their first business was to organise lectures and spread literature broadcast throughout the district. Both these courses were immensely facilitated by the invaluable supply of cheap Collectivist tracts and leaflets provided by the FABIAN SOCIETY (before mentioned), and by the generous arrangements for free lectures (from over a hundred lecturers) offered by that body. Most useful assistance of a similar kind was also afforded by the literature and lecturers of the LAND NATIONALISATION SOCIETY* and the ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE,† of which more anon.

* 47, Albany Buildings, Victoria Street, Westminster, (President, Alfred Russel Wallace, F.R.S.)

† 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

This special preaching and teaching of Collectivism, as distinguished from Collectivist action in connection with our party and municipal machinery, was characterised by certain aspects of interest to the historical student, both in relation to what may be called the scientific, as well as to the popular side of the exposition of State Industrialism. A passing reference may be made to one or two of these.

The attitude of the scientific school of Collectivists, both in the press and on the platform, differed considerably from that of the Phalanx. The members of the former distinctly held themselves aloof from all promise or prophecy of details in connection with the coming régime, as being premature and therefore useless. They confined themselves to demonstrating the unassailable nature of its general principles, their basis in sound economy, and their purely evolutionary character as the final outcome of a long series of stages, each of them more or less useful and necessary in their day and generation for industrial, political, and social development.

But some years' experience had shown that this very important and necessary method of dealing with the subject of State Industrialism had, from its very nature, somewhat limited opportunities of attracting the attention of the public. The latter is, as a rule, little interested in first principles, and usually refuses to occupy its time in reasoning from the abstract to the concrete. On the other hand, the action of the Phalanx in nailing its colours to the mast upon a political propaganda based on a policy of definite details, however unphilosophical it might seem to the more doctrinaire advocates of Collectivism, was in point of fact of invaluable assistance to the latter.

Thousands of people, whose interest would never have been aroused by the discussion of the abstract principles of State Industrialism, were struck at once either by the novelty or the audacity of the new programme; and were thereby for the first time induced to study the scientific foundation on which it rested. When it was found that the principles underlying the demands of the Phalanx were not only capable of being strongly

supported by argument, but could be, and were, addressed by the apostles of Collectivism to audiences of college dons, Cockney commercials, and Yorkshire coal-miners with equal vigour, success, and security from effective reply, a demand arose for the more solid literature of the subject and a more scientific exposition of the principles of industrial economy, which was equally unexpected by, and encouraging to, all the adherents of the new movement.

Undoubtedly the greatest obstacle to the acceptance of Collectivist principles in general was the difficulty experienced by the bulk of ordinary minds in speculating upon the carrying out of Collectivism in details to which even the elaborate manifesto of the Phalanx afforded no direct clue. Nothing was more common than for a fairly sympathetic inquirer to ask the preachers of the new doctrine for their programme on small points of social organisation or domestic economy. "What," he would say, "do you propose to do with this or that? How is so and so to be arranged? What have you in view to deal with such and such a question?" &c.; and made his further interest consciously or unconsciously depend upon the answer.

To these queries the scientific Collectivists had obviously only one reply to make. A detailed programme was impossible, they would say, and, if possible, would be useless. Only the conditions of the coming era could settle these minor points, and no arrangements made in advance could possibly accelerate, delay, or influence those which a Collectivist community would make for itself when once it had decided to become Collectivist. All that could be done would be to lay down the broad distinctions between the Individualist system and its proposed successor, and leave the rest to that natural and inevitable evolution which would, and must, arrange all lesser details by mere force of circumstances.

It is obvious that any other attitude than the above would have been as utterly unwarrantable as impolitic. Any departure from it would have instantly involved opportunities for diversity of opinion practically limitless, without in the least

providing a machinery for reconciling these differences. But it is equally certain that when people were invited to speculate for themselves upon the probable working out of the details of domestic, social, and business arrangements under a system so widely different from the only one known to them, the utter absence of the imaginative faculty in the average Briton operated very largely to dissipate an interest in the new movement which might otherwise have been maintained and increased.

To meet the disadvantages of the official Collectivist attitude, there was only one really effective remedy. This was for free lances of the party to lay before the public from time to time hypothetical illustrations of the innumerable ways in which the various suggested points might (rather than must) be met. They thereby showed that the difficulty would probably lie in the selection, rather than in the absence, of solutions to the problems which would present themselves for consideration. From this point of view it was an advantage rather than otherwise that the flights of fancy in question (usually taking the form of post-dated narratives and stories) displayed almost every conceivable diversity of suggestion as to the details of National Co-operation; and it is not to be doubted that the spread of the new evangel was notably accelerated by the adoption of the course above indicated.

In more than one respect the all-round character of the programme put forward by the Phalanx helped materially towards its acceptance. Earnest thinkers who were discouraged by the obvious insufficiency of any or all of the political or philanthropic nostrums of the day, said to themselves: "Here is at last something complete, something exhaustive, something final; something which has only to succeed at all to succeed in everything. Here is something really worth working for." To many minds the fact that a policy was offered for their consideration which, if accepted generally, would almost inevitably shape for good the ultimate aspect of modern civilisation, was sufficient to arouse an earnestness of unselfish enthusiasm which no mere incident of commonplace political partisanship or

mechanical philanthropy could have excited at all. The recognition of the direct bearing which the education of the nation in Collectivist details, as proposed, would have upon the hastening of their adoption in actual practice, was a powerful stimulus to the energy of thousands who would have seen little to be hoped for from the mere preaching of abstract principles.

As regards the third phase of the Phalanx propaganda, the exertions both of individual members and of the branch societies were untiringly directed towards pressing forward in all available directions the municipal employment of labour, control of public services, carrying on of industrial enterprise, and assumption of landed property. They lost no opportunity of urging public bodies to carry out public works themselves instead of handing them over to contractors, and fought continuously for the establishment of a standard of shorter hours and anti-sweating wages for public employés of all grades. The various local Councils were perpetually pressed to undertake the ownership and direct working of the gas and water supplies, of electric lighting, and of tram, train, and omnibus service, besides docks and ferries at the seaports. They were bullied into putting the various Sanitary Acts into operation against slum-property owners, and occasionally coaxed into providing workmen's dwellings and lodging houses. In course of time a large number of the poor-law centres were led to carry on farming and industrial occupations in connection with the workhouses under their control. The able-bodied paupers were called upon to work either at their own trades, if any, or on the farms as labourers ; and a considerable development of market-gardening resulted from these measures. In several instances the town councils were persuaded to embark in the opening of coffee-palaces and bread-shops, besides refreshment-rooms in public parks, &c. ; and in many other places the provision of music by town bands at regular times and places became a conspicuous feature of local municipal government.

It is hardly necessary to say that all this had been pressed upon the community, not in the least with the expectation of its having any appreciable effect upon the general welfare, but simply in order to popularise the idea of the public employment of labour and the municipal carrying on of industrial enterprise; and thereby definitely commit to a course of actual (if unrecognised) Collectivism a vast number of people who would probably express for the system, under its own name, the greatest contempt and aversion.

The recommendation that members of the Phalanx should, wherever possible, "capture" the local party organisations—in other words, secure a preponderating influence on their executives—may appear to the reader to involve a policy which would be very difficult to carry out, and which would be correspondingly important in its results when successful. As a matter of fact, success was not only ridiculously easy of attainment, but was of comparatively small utility when attained. The explanation of this lay in the *vie intime* of party organisations in Great Britain at the time referred to. It was a characteristic of the political life of the period that the most furious and abounding energy at election-times was succeeded in off-seasons by an apathy and indifference, both in organisation and party education, which was almost incredible. In the Liberal and Radical Associations, with which we are here concerned (as it was to these that the Collectivists more especially addressed themselves), it was as a rule a matter of the utmost difficulty to form a "Council" of 300 or 400 members out of a party electorate even of 6000 or 7000 voters. An attendance of thirty or forty of these at a general meeting, or of half-a-dozen at the meetings of the six or eight ward-councils into which the general Council would usually be divided, would be a large average. Members willing to work actively on the ward committees or the central executive were quite scarce, and those prepared to act as officials (such as secretaries,

treasurers, or chairmen) were still scarcer. Volunteers for the fulfilment of these various functions were therefore received everywhere with open arms. Under such circumstances, nothing was easier than for the Phalanx members of the different organisations (by showing a willingness to undertake work, and by putting in a good record of attendances) to get elected and to elect each other to a majority of all the positions which carried with them the management of the Associations. This was actually done in many scores of constituencies, and in London especially the Collectivists were also able to elect each other to the representative delegateships to the Council and Executive of the London Radical Union.

It may be supposed that Collectivist influence in the cases above described would at once secure the selection of Collectivist candidates to fight the party battle in forthcoming elections. Unfortunately, this did not follow at all.

When a contest was due, the vital question was always that of money. Under the property system of permitting (and therefore enforcing) election expenses to the amount of many hundreds of pounds, besides throwing the enormous cost of correcting the official registration-lists upon private individuals (*i.e.* the party organisations), the ultimate wielders of power in the various Associations were always those who found the money for the registration-courts and the election, whether on party grounds or as friends of a particular candidate. Only the smallest fraction of the constituencies could be coaxed into paying even the conventional shilling a year towards the above expenses and the general outlay of the Associations. The tune was therefore necessarily called by those who paid the piper, namely, the local Liberals and Radicals whose large subscriptions kept the party machinery going. Nothing in the views of these people suggested the slightest sympathy with, or assistance to, Collectivism. The Liberal who was not a Dissenter was usually a mere anti-Tory. The bulk of the Dissenters were Tory in everything but their hatred of the Church and of the publicans; and a large section of them hated the publicans

chiefly because the latter were electioneering allies of the Church. The fact that the Church had laboriously earned this hatred by virtue of a century of insufferable arrogance, mean tyranny, and unscrupulous support of landlord brigandage, did not unfortunately provide its haters with any elements of a really progressive programme. As a result, the presence of the Collectivists in the Liberal Associations involved at the best a compromise between the selection of a Collectivist and that of a Liberationist teetotaler, who usually called himself a Gladstonian to prevent other people calling him a Tory. But this best was, after all, a good deal better than nothing.

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In a general way the Phalanx leaders strenuously discouraged any setting up of separate electoral or political machinery by their adherents either in London or the country, and recommended Phalanx candidates to be run only as the nominees of local parties strong enough not to make the candidature ridiculous. The exceptions to this rule were suggested to be constituencies in which reactionary Liberal Individualists held seats by majorities which could be endangered by an alliance between the Collectivists and the Tories; and Tory seats which a Collectivist candidate could attack with more chance of support amongst the artisan electorate than a mere Liberal or Radical, whose claims upon it would be simply nil.

Even where no really deserving candidate was before a constituency, the Phalanxists were recommended always to vote, and get others to vote, for the least objectionable one. This was on the double ground that one candidate at least was sure to deserve being voted against, and that it was very important, in view of future contingencies, to persuade the "mugwumps"* (or habitual non-voters) to get into the habit of using their electoral power, even in the absence of any strong present inducement to do so.

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* An invaluable American addition to our electioneering technology.

As regards points of the Phalanx programme which lay outside of its Collectivist aspect, the members of the League worked energetically to further every kind of electoral and administrative reform, to expose the colossal swindles of local and Imperial taxation, and to popularise sound doctrines of public finance.

They pointed out the crushing weight, the injustices, the inequalities, and the shameless exemptions which characterised the existing method of raising local revenue almost entirely by means of rates assessed on annual values of property and paid by the *occupiers alone*. They showed that any attempts at rating ground-landlords, either generally or in connection with special enhancements of the value of their property by public improvements ("betterment"), would only mean that the new burden on owners would at the first opportunity be thrown back on the tenants, in the shape of increased rent. Nothing but a Land Court could prevent this, and a Land Court would be a revolution only second to that proposed by the Phalanx.

The League therefore constantly urged upon the ratepayers to agitate for the complete abolition of the whole system of local rates on occupiers' rentals, and for the substitution of Graduated Income-Tax on all incomes or portions of income accruing within local administrative areas. It also demanded the municipal appropriation of "Unearned Increment" (or rises in value) through the taxation, at nearly 20s. in the pound, of all future increases of rent not proved by landlords to be due to their own outlay of capital.*

The Collectivists further recommended that all unoccupied land should be subject to local graduated income-tax on its annual value, even as assessed by the owner; and suggested that, to avoid hardship, the tax and arrears should be payable if preferred out of the first proceeds of rent or sale accruing from

* It was considered to be desirable to leave (say) 1s. or 2s. in the pound of unearned increment to the landlords as commission for collecting increased rents for the municipalities. Of course, evasions by means of heavy premiums paid in place of rent would require to be penalised.

the property. But they insisted that in all cases any excess of rent or sale-price over the owners' original estimate should belong to the municipality, while the latter should have power to purchase the property at any time at the said valuation.

The much-vexed problem of taxing "betterment" (*i.e.*, compelling owners of land and buildings, improved by adjacent expenditure of public money, to pay a share of any outlay which would raise the value of their property) was dismissed as being practically incapable of solution, and scarcely worth solving under any circumstances. It was urged that no method of estimate or adjustment of "betterment" tax would be satisfactory in principle, or likely to avoid endless complexities and difficulties in practice.

The true course was obviously to secure powers in every case to buy out and out, at the value of the day, the whole area likely to be advantageously affected by the proposed public expenditure. Critics who pretended to be aghast at the enormous probable expense of this process were invited to observe that it would cost simply a stroke of the pen, and nothing more. The whole change would consist in future payments of rent within the specified area being made to the municipality instead of to the former landlords.

The latter would receive municipal interest-bearing bonds to the same amount, but of course not subject to any future increase. Questions of title would affect claimants only, and they would have to fight the matter out amongst themselves. The public title would become *ipso facto* unassailable.

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Apart from the phases of political activity above detailed, the Collectivists did yeoman service in the constituencies by taking every opportunity to attack, damage, and explode the political reputations of the parliamentary, and especially of the Liberal, leaders of the day. They exposed without mercy the invariable truckling of the latter to the property interest, their utter ignorance or neglect of sound industrial economics, their connivance

with the capitalist exploitation of Free-Trade,* the claptrap and hypocrisy of their longwinded public utterances in favour of reform, and their unscrupulous ingenuity in setting up sham policies to bamboozle the electorate and send public opinion tearing off on false scents. They ridiculed unsparingly the almost idolatrous veneration accorded to the more successful party tricksters, and denounced the abject sycophancy and grotesque adulation of the newspaper press under their control. They pointed out that the various proposals for disestablishment, national government in Ireland, and drink-traffic control were the most transparent of electioneering tricks, anxiously nursed by the Tories themselves, and put forward entirely to drag a red herring across the track of real reform. They exposed the hollowness of the sham attack on the House of Lords by showing that the Peers were virtually the close allies of the Liberal leaders and of five-sixths of the property Liberals in the House of Commons; that the latter were only too well pleased whenever the reforms they reluctantly advocated were burked in the Upper House; that not a score of Liberal members or Ministers cared a brass farthing for any really useful social or financial reforms at all; and, finally, that the Peers could not stand out a week against a Ministry and a majority which was elected for business, did business, and meant business.

These various efforts in the direction of calling a spade a spade were eventually successful in bringing a portion of the electorate to see that their idols had a good deal of clay in their composition, to say nothing of brass. From this stage the way of electoral salvation became broad and unmistakable. The disillusioned Tory or Radical became a Collectivist or a mugwump, according as his characteristic temperament was a sympathetic one or the reverse; and his days of political hero-worship came to an untimely end.

* In spite of the significant fact that it was beginning to be supported, on account of its infinite mischiefs, by the Tory and property parties themselves.

Such were the conditions under which the Phalanx and its affiliated branches began slowly, and at first almost imperceptibly, to make way amongst the electorate.

Meanwhile, as the century drew towards its close, the inevitable evils attendant upon an Individualist régime which we detailed in our Introduction were not only steadily on the increase, but were beginning to excite no small alarm in quarters not at all used to take any but comfortably optimist views of contemporary society.

Even before the influence of the Phalanx commenced to be specifically felt in the constituencies, the democratic advanced guard (which the Collectivists always supported) had extorted a sullen concession of its demands from the Tory-Liberal property interest. The cry against the democrats of "dividing the party," which had frequently in former times led to a sacrifice of their claims on the Liberals (lest seats should be lost to the Conservatives), was ceasing to be available. At each election up to the close of the century the sham Liberal party was dragged forward more and more ruthlessly by the democratic contingent, until the election of 1901 enabled the Phalanx to take for the first time a stand of its own as a distinct electoral power.

Conflicts of interest between capital and labour had become chronic, and had only failed to destroy our foreign trade because our rivals abroad had very much the same difficulty to contend against themselves. The Trade-Unions had vastly increased in numbers and in solidarity without contributing much to the Collectivist education of the labour interest, or putting forward anything of value towards a solution of the problems of the national industry. On the other hand, competition amongst the administrative and distributing classes—the clerks, shopmen, agents, commercial travellers, and small tradesmen—had brought about a state of things verging on the desperate. Bankruptcies had quadrupled and sextupled. Principals were thankful to become employés, while clerks and shopmen trembled at what a day might bring forth. Travellers and agents by scores and

hundreds went under in a vain struggle against crushing odds in competition. Homes formerly of comfort and luxury were broken up, families disappeared silently, suicide and insanity increased year by year. No business man could guess what his position would be in twelve months' time. No father of a family knew where to place his sons, or how to provide for his daughters. Firm after firm was absorbed in great syndicates or trusts, or was extinguished by their opposition. The syndicates dispensed with two-thirds of the former staffs, and few if any openings presented themselves to the discharged employés. When foreign trade and export decreased, it led to the closing of works and mills; when they expanded, it enriched no one but the great manufacturers, as machinery at once overtook any increased demand. The mill-owners, acting in concert, periodically invited conflicts with the Trade-Unions, and exhausted the men's resources while they cleared their overstocked warehouses or waited for a rise in prices. The price of wheat steadily fell under increased imports from India, Asia Minor, and Russia, and farm land was a drug in the market. The marriage rate was found to be seriously on the decrease. Pauperism had reached a cost of £17,000,000 per annum.

Thus the nation, which had for nearly a century sought prosperity in political reform and industrial supremacy, found itself at its close with almost every important political reform conceded and its industrial supremacy practically unimpaired, while nevertheless apparently on the verge of final and irremediable ruin.

CHAPTER IV.

We have no desire to suggest that public opinion, either at the date of our narrative or previously, had remained indifferent to the great and increasing evils we have recorded. On the contrary, great efforts were continuously made, and many policies

were recommended, to deal with the results of competitive Individualism as they presented themselves to the nineteenth century public. Our account of the adoption of the only real remedy, namely, the extinction of the system itself, may conveniently be preceded by a reference to some of the useless, mischievous, or inadequate panaceas which were recommended or essayed at the period under discussion.

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Philanthropy, whether taking the direct form of what was called "charity," or by indirect measures endeavouring to improve the surroundings, means of living, health, comfort, or enjoyment of single individuals, occupied a large share of public attention. It gave rise to an exercise of humanitarian effort of which it is impossible to speak without respect and admiration. But it is equally impossible not to regret that so energetic and extensive a machinery was practically thrown away on what really amounted to a bolstering up and a perpetuation of all the evils desired to be removed. Innumerable individuals, besides the vast philanthropic societies, wasted years of labour and millions of money upon the effort to suppress the symptoms of social disease, while all by common consent left the disease itself alone. The result of their work was for all effective purposes nil. While orphans, discharged prisoners, fallen women, paupers, cripples, drunkards and thieves were succoured or reformed by twos and threes, their ranks were allowed to be recruited by scores and hundreds with pitiless precision and regularity. Every effort of the noblest charity, devotion, and self-sacrifice, of time, energy, money, and organisation had been lavished for a century on the attempt to tinker up a hopelessly rotten fabric ; and all this labour left behind it little more trace than a snowflake falling on a wave of the sea.

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Political reform, which fifty years before had been quite seriously expected to improve the social condition of the nation generally and of the working classes in particular, was now

recognised to be *per se* utterly incapable of effecting the smallest amelioration of the vices and inequalities of the existing social organism. Long before the date of the Great Revolution almost all the points of the Charter of 1848* had become part of our political system; while at the same time the evils characterising the society of those former days, instead of being lessened or removed, had increased and become intensified almost beyond calculation. The politicians of the Liberal party had now lost all hold upon the sympathies of social reformers. They were regarded with precisely the same indifference or utter scorn as the Conservatives; and, like the latter, were steeped to the lips in the incurable partisan insincerity which tainted the whole political life of the period, and contributed so powerfully to the development of the real national party. Ten years after the Reform Acts of 1884-5, mere doctrinaire Radicalism was a piece of exploded quackery, Conservatism an evaporating jelly, and Toryism a fossil; while out of the chaos of blunders, fallacies, lies, shams, place-hunting scoundrelism, and political imposture, the fabric of the new social commonwealth was beginning to be reared with the slow yet irresistible force of a geological upheaval.

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Changes in our fiscal relations with the colonies and foreign nations were noisily preached in many quarters as a certain panacea for all our industrial and social troubles. But if the fact were not clearly attested, it would seem incredible that a country, which for more than a century had been so shamelessly exploited by the two monstrous humbugs of "Protection" and "Free Trade" (as manipulated by their respective authors), should be invited to experiment in the still more monstrous humbug of "Reciprocity." It must be recollected that the system of "Protection" (as maintained by the landed interest

* The "six points" of the Charter were Manhood Suffrage, Equal Electoral Districts, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Abolition of Property Qualification, Payment of Members.

down to 1846) had for its sole object the keeping up of farm-rents by prohibiting (actually or virtually) the import of foreign corn, regardless of the partial famines periodically produced thereby. During this reign of vampyrism, poverty and starvation amongst the labourers were, of course, just as uniform features as under its successor, Free Trade; but the landlords flourished exceedingly, and the farmers occasionally kept their heads above water. Under the changed method of exploitation which was forced upon the country by the Cobden-Bright gang of labour-sweaters, the great object was no longer to keep up rents, but manufacturers' profits. The import of foreign food (raised rent-free on virgin soil) was intended to have the double effect of lowering wages,* and (by extinguishing our home food-supply) of compelling the nation to pay in manufactures for the food it was driven to purchase abroad. The plunder amassed by the manufacturers under these conditions was almost beyond calculation.

To blind their victims to the actual working of Free Trade under their auspices, the supporters of this piece of criminal quackery never ceased to brag of the "expansion of commerce" under their régime, and the colossal increase of "prosperity" and "wealth" which accompanied it. As a matter of fact, the expansion of commerce *per se* was of no benefit to the nation at all. Seeing that a community prospers only when comfort and happiness are uniformly diffused through it, the mere growth of our exports and imports had no bearing whatever (except as regards the exhaustion of our mineral resources) upon the national welfare. Nor was the gigantic total wealth of the country (which was undoubtedly owing primarily to Free Trade) of any advantage to it, as long as that wealth was daily concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, instead of being equitably shared by those who produced it.

* Because with cheaper food the artisans could keep themselves alive on less money than when food was dear, while competition for employment amongst themselves kept them down to a mere existence-wage.

The Tory landowners, who at first fought to the death against Free Trade, became later on its strongest supporters. This arose from their recognition of the fact that what they lost in rents of rural land they regained a thousand times over by the rise in value of their town holdings—a rise which was caused almost entirely by the gradual destruction of British agriculture, and the consequent concentration of all industry and enterprise in the great centres of population.*

The final quackery of "Reciprocity" (otherwise termed "Fiscal Federation" and "Fair Trade") was called forth by the manufacturers finding that their little game of exploiting British industry in foreign markets was beginning to be spoilt by the hostile tariffs set up by the foreign labour-exploiters themselves. It was now proposed to check or stop, by means of preferential duties, the import of food from those colonies or States which would not admit our manufactures on favourable terms, in order to offer our food-market to more obliging com-

* The sincerity of the Free Traders' position may be gauged by the arguments used when the farmers (towards the close of the century) asked to have a 5s. duty placed on imported wheat in order to be able to grow it in face of the American and other supplies. The success of this measure would of course have involved a corresponding diminution of the manufacturers' exports in payment for foreign corn. Hence there came a chorus of assertions that not a farthing of the 5s. would go into the farmer's pocket, and that the landlord would secure it all in the shape of increased rent—a thing which a Land Court, on the model of that already organised in Ireland, could of course stop with a stroke of the pen. When this clap-trap was exposed, the cry was raised that the proposed duty, to be of any use at all, must proportionately increase the price of corn to the consumer—and this was talked of as if it meant the end of the world. The real truth was that while the extra 5s. per quarter—added to the average price of 32s. 5d. (1885—1892)—would of course be paid by the consumer, it would not trouble him in the least. So far from 5s. a quarter extra being a crushing burden, we had paid (under Free Trade) 47s. 1d. in 1881, 51s. 3d. in 1873, 68s. 4d. in 1867, and 73s. 11d. in 1856 (*London Gazette* averages), without noticing any very conspicuous difference. It may be further pointed out that while the Tory-Radical Free Traders professed to recoil with horror from burdening the British citizen with an extra 5s. a quarter wheat-duty (say £4,680,000 on the 18,720,000 quarters imported in 1891), these economists with one accord insisted upon inflicting almost identically the same annual burden (£4,120,000) upon him in the shape of *duties on groceries* coming from abroad (which, unlike wheat, could not be produced here at all). So that had the duties on the latter been transferred to wheat, the protection claimed by the British farmer would have cost the country next to nothing whatever, while 3,000,000 acres would have been restored to wheat-cultivation. But this was unanimously scouted by all the property factions.

munities. As it was perfectly immaterial to the British wheat-grower whether he was ruined by an American, Canadian, Russian, or any other competitor, so long as he was ruined in any case, this burlesque of a fiscal policy never obtained any footing worth speaking of. It only served to delay the admission that both Protection and Free Trade, as exploited for the exclusive benefit of small cliques of the population, had utterly and disastrously failed.

Emigration, a favourite panacea of the middle of the century (and in itself an admirable illustration of the sagacity of a community which could see no way out of its blunders except the expatriation of its most energetic citizens), had long ceased to be available. As a remedy either for "over-population" or for the evils of competition, it was now recognised to be impracticable even by the most shortsighted or optimistic of advisers. All the disadvantages arising in Great Britain from the want of capital, or the employment of it, were at this time in full force in America and Australasia. Unskilled labour was at a hopeless discount there as well as here, and the opportunities formerly presented by what were, a generation ago, new communities had almost completely disappeared. Europeans were returning in thousands from Brazil, Argentina, and the Antipodes. Those who persisted in selecting the United States as a field for effort simply added to the herd of sweated or unemployed wage-earners whose presence was now almost as dangerous and embarrassing an element in the New World as in the Old.

Co-operative societies and sectional co-operation generally had, ever since their foundation by Robert Owen early in the century, been looked upon as the most hopeful of all remedies for the lamentable results of competition and wage-slavery. But these had succeeded in their special objects beyond the dreams of their early advocates, without in the slightest degree

assisting in the solution of the labour problem generally. Such statistics as these presented in 1891 of 1,554 societies,* with a membership of 1,117,055, a share capital of £12,261,952, investments of £6,296,964, and annual sales to the amount of £43,200,319,† would certainly have appeared Utopian to Owen and his colleagues. Yet this gigantic development of associated productive industry left all the social difficulties of the day practically untouched. As a matter of fact, it was now seen that these societies only enabled certain members of the working class to escape out of that class, and to rise above their fellows. By so doing they extended in a new direction the mischiefs of capitalism, and left the rest of the workers in a worse position than before. The kindred scheme of profit-sharing was open to precisely the same objection. The evils of competition remained in full force while co-operative societies or profit-sharing firms competed for business with each other or with individual capitalist manufacturers. They were increased just in proportion as the associated workers could undersell the individual mill or factory owner, and thereby drive the latter to still further lower the wage-rate or dismiss "hands" through the introduction of new and more efficient machinery. The fundamental law that industrial co-operation to succeed from a social point of view must be general, and therefore national, had not yet dawned upon the producing class. In the recognition of that law lay, as we shall presently see, the solution of the whole problem at issue.‡

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Most students of the ephemeral literature of the end of the century will have noticed the curious and suspicious prominence accorded to the subject of Thrift in the platform oratory of

* *I.e.*, for manufacturing purposes only. The so-called co-operative stores are not here alluded to, and were in reality only large cash retailers, making a profit for the shareholders.

† Report, Co-operative Congress, 1891.

‡ "It is, indeed, certain that industrial society will not permanently remain without a systematic organisation. The mere conflict of private interests will never produce a well-ordered commonwealth of labour."—Dr. J. K. Ingram (Encyclopædia Britannica XIX. 382).

capitalist speechmakers and noble lords on the stump, when it was a question of posing as friends of the working classes or sympathisers with social improvement. As all the removable evils of modern society were either directly or indirectly caused by the speakers alluded to, in their capacities of labour-exploiters and landowners, their views of the proper remedy for these evils were entitled to serious consideration. They deserved, in fact, the same attention as a skilled burglar's verdict on the merits of a particular lock or strongbox. A not very astute person would probably argue from a professional cracksman's enthusiastic recommendation of a certain patent safe that its mechanism was of a character to meet the convenience of his order. On similar grounds any social nostrum advocated by both capitalists and landlords might with perfect safety be conjectured to be either impracticable, useless, or mischievous. As a remedy for the disastrous concomitants of nineteenth century industrialism, Thrift could be seen at a glance to be open to all three of these objections. This was probably sufficient to account for its remarkable popularity with the "property interest."

The main feature which characterised the life of the lowest grades of the community being the impossibility of obtaining adequate means of existence, the suggestion that they should raise themselves, by increased economy, out of the slough in which they were vainly struggling, was nothing more than a brutal farce. If ever intended seriously it involved simply a recommendation of suicide by starvation. A man earning £9 a week might find it possible to save a considerable portion of his income, without starving himself or stinting his family in food, comforts, or proper education. But to ask a man who was thankful to earn 9s. a week (and that only occasionally) to improve his condition by "saving" only meant that his already starved, ragged, and wretchedly housed wife and children should suffer still greater privation, while he himself, through insufficient food and the resulting enfeebled strength, would probably lose the little work he was able to secure. In the

case of the class whose position of all others most urgently called for improvement, Thrift was a remedy which, even if of utility elsewhere, was here impossible to apply.

But it is obvious that "saving," as a general practice, would be as useless under other conditions as it was impracticable with the very poor, and would be mischievous precisely in proportion to the extent of its adoption. Regarded from the point of view of the whole community, Thrift meant, and could only mean, diminished consumption. But diminished consumption means diminished production, hence diminished employment of labour, diminished earnings, diminished purchases of comforts or necessaries, diminished business for distributors as well as producers, and (as a result of a lower average of expenditure) the inevitable reduction of the general wage-level to the new standard of maintenance.

Not only would every grade of industry be injured, but as production is the sole source of wealth, and labour the sole source of production, the whole country must necessarily be impoverished precisely in proportion to the exercise of the much belauded Thrift. The *reductio ad absurdum* of the gospel of "saving" came when it was argued that no harm could result "because so few of the lower classes could be persuaded to economise"—in other words that the proposed remedy for the industrial failure of the age was to be successful just in proportion as nobody made use of it. That *individuals* might better their condition by Thrift, just as they could by joining a co-operative society, was undisputed. But a panacea whose efficacy was admitted to depend on the limited range of its application was self-condemned.*

* In 1890-1, out of 175,852 inmates of workhouses (one-third being children, and another third women) no fewer than 14,808 had been members of benefit societies. In 4593 cases the society had broken up, usually from insolvency. (H. of C. Return 1891, No. 366.) Toynbee estimates the total savings of the working-classes at this period at about £130,000,000, the whole capital of the country being (in 1890) at least £12,000,000,000 ("Industrial Revolution," page 140)—so that 80 per cent. of the nation held 1 per cent. of its capital. The savings of all classes in friendly societies and savings banks amounted in 1892 to £218,364,046 (Brabrook, Labour Commission, October 27th, 1892).

The truth was that the glib preaching of aristocratic and capitalist platform spouters had nothing whatever in view but the filling of their own pockets. The man who tried to economise under the conditions which characterised the whole lower section of the working class would either succeed in lifting himself out of the semi-pauper grade or die of starvation. In either case he would do what the patrons of Thrift desired of him, viz., keep off the rates, and thereby enable the ratepayers to pay higher rents.

Recognition of the connection between the mischiefs of contemporary industrialism and the divorce of the people from the soil, became increasingly general towards the end of the century. This led to a very widely extended opinion that the real opening for a better future lay in the nearest possible approximation to the old national land tenure, when the soil was open to any one willing to cultivate it. One set of reformers confined its attention to the movement for securing to farm labourers, urban workmen, and others, such pieces of land as individuals or families could cultivate without giving up their other avocations. The universal and desperate eagerness of the farmers and landowners to deprive the peasantry of the smallest privileges with regard to garden and allotment culture was a sufficient evidence of the value of these privileges to the actual cultivators. Not only this, but artisans in other trades could by means of allotments add largely to their income, health, and comfort by growing fresh garden and other produce; always assuming that they could by strikes or legislation secure proper and sufficient leisure. So imperative, indeed, became the demand for land in this form,* that the land and property interest in both Houses of Parliament passed more than one measure (usually described as an "Allotment-Act") with the covert object of discouraging and burking the movement in

* Aided by the "Allotments and Small Holdings Association," 12 Cherry Street, Birmingham.

question. This was done by making the acquisition of small plots of land as difficult and expensive as possible, by putting the necessary machinery into the hands of local authorities who (representing the land interest) were determined not to use it, and by allowing monstrous rents to be exacted for such tracts as could be extorted from those landlords who were willing to part with land for any useful purpose at all.

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The movement in favour of Peasant Proprietorship had originally something in common with the above. But it became associated with the agitations for (so-called) "Free Land" and for Leasehold Enfranchisement; and soon fell into the disrepute and oblivion which was the fate of the latter proposals. It was clearly recognised that all three had a direct tendency to perpetuate the monopoly of the soil, and to increase all the evils of landlordism, by adding to the number of those interested in maintaining the system. At the same time it was certain that any class of small freehold cultivators which might come into existence through such measures would be narrow-minded, uncivic, reactionary and Individualistic in the most disastrous degree. Hence the earnest patronage of these proposals by a large section of the property interest, as soon as their real nature had been exposed by the Collectivists and they had been consequently abandoned by the advanced wing of the Radical party.

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A more distinct approximation to a national policy was that which aimed at restoring to the nation the annual value of the soil of which it had been robbed, by the process of gradually increasing the taxation on the whole land rent of the country until it reached 20s. in the pound. All other sources of local and imperial income were to be abolished, and the land-tax revenue used in their place.

The chief defects of this proposal (known as the Single Tax scheme*) lay in its still leaving with the landlords practically absolute control over the national soil, and in the non-provision of any remedy for the evils of competition (and the resulting fabulous rents) for town land. It was evident that just in proportion as tradesmen and others were relieved of local and imperial taxation they could afford to offer more rent for their premises. They would therefore have either to do so, or give way to competitors willing to outbid them. The additional rent would either be secured by the landlords until the next adjustment of land-tax, or be collected by the Exchequer without the competing tenants being relieved in any appreciable degree. In precisely the same way the overcrowding in low class house property, and the costliness of the worst accommodation (arising from the inevitable pressure of population on area) would not only not be checked, but would increase just in proportion as the deterrent of high local rating was withdrawn.

Nevertheless, the "Single Tax" onslaught on the stronghold of the landlords, being conducted with remarkable energy and ability, was of incalculable service if only for the damage caused thereby to the "property interest," and to the superstitious reverence with which it had been so long regarded. Indeed we may go so far as to say that in default of any better and more complete policy, the programme of the "Land Restoration League" might have been adopted with signal advantage.

The national evils of industrial competition and profit-making would have remained practically untouched. But the enormous benefits would have accrued of securing to the State the "unearned increment" now thieved by the landlords, and of providing almost unlimited funds for education, for sanitary reform, for the endowment of hospitals, and for the pensioning, as a matter of course, of all persons over a certain age without the

* This was powerfully advocated by Mr. Henry George ("Progress and Poverty"), and by the "English Land Restoration League." The Financial Reform Association, Hackins Hey, Liverpool, also adopted this policy.

stigma of pauperism. These and many other measures were recognised as being essentially necessary social reforms, but their advent was interminably delayed by the difficulty as yet experienced in compelling the propertied class to bear its share of the national burdens.

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A still closer approach to the only real solution of the problems of the time was advocated by the "Land Nationalisation Society" and its sympathisers. These reformers proposed to abolish the whole existing land system root and branch, and to revert to the tenure of the true Golden Age of the British worker, when the whole soil was held direct from the State, and the mischievous profit rent exacted by intermediate landholders was unknown. In other words they sought to make the land State property, and to extinguish for ever the private owner of every grade or class.

This was in truth a genuine remedy, as far as it went, and we pass it by at this point without comment only because it was in reality part of the complete system of reform to be described in the following pages. It was carried into effect with the latter, and was only prevented from exhibiting its own separate and conspicuous advantages through the overwhelming effect on the existing régime produced by the more comprehensive revolution of which it was an essential factor.

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It may perhaps be convenient to say here that a very considerable number of people (of whose views it is desired to speak with every possible respect) looked upon all external measures of reform, legislation, or social and political action as incapable of effecting any real improvement in society as constituted at the time of which we write. None of these things, they averred, would be of the slightest use as long as men themselves remained selfish, unfeeling, unscrupulous, greedy of influence, power, and wealth. Society consisted of units, and

could only be improved when the units composing it were improved. All effort would therefore be wasted that was not directed at raising the moral tone of the individual. The disappearance of the evils of the existing régime must be looked for just in proportion as the ethical regeneration of the nation was effected.

On what grounds this particular miracle could be expected to occur—at least during the present geological epoch—did not very clearly appear. Admitting the possession of an almost unlimited faculty for shutting one's eyes to the most obvious facts, it is nevertheless with feelings of respectful amazement that the expectation or hope of a wide spread moral improvement in mankind is recorded; and the historian can only wonder at the pathetic reliance on a broken reed which conceded even the possibility of such a regeneration within any measurable distance of time. To go no further than the expressed opinion of those claiming to have official cognisance of moral shortcomings, it was the burden of every sermon of every preacher of every denomination that the wickedness of mankind was daily increasing in extent and in heinousness. It was averred that the old sins remained and that new ones were invented, and that the race generally (present company—especially if fashionable—being usually excepted) was on the high road to perdition.

Without quite conceding the infallibility claimed by these various gentlemen on matters respecting which their mundane knowledge was not always very great, we may at all events admit that nothing has been more distinctly exhibited than the inherent and ineradicable selfishness of the whole human race, under all conditions of civilisation, religion, education, and physical surroundings. Equally obvious have been the permanence and irrepressibility of that selfishness, except under external pressure; while external pressure, to be effective, has always required to take the form of public opinion and special conditions of social environment.

Whether public opinion ever expressed more than the determination of the average individual not to be wronged, may perhaps be doubted. It is quite certain that the only favourable social organisation must be one in which the individual is deprived of the opportunity of wronging others. But the very existence of nineteenth century civilisation was dependent on unlimited opportunities of practising robbery, cruelty, oppression, and meanness of every conceivable kind; and the mere presence and availability of those opportunities made any attempt to restrain their being utilised an idle dream. Therefore public opinion, even of a useful sort, was prevented from exercising any appreciable effect whatever on a régime under which everybody had to share in the evildoing, or be crushed by it.

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As a matter of fact, so far from the evils of Individualism ceasing through a higher type of morality becoming general, it was the very excess and enormity of the mischief which eventually evolved the remedy.

That remedy derived its entire efficacy from the fact of its having neither dependence on, nor connection with, any standard of personal ethics or of moral obligation whatever. It neither hoped nor expected anything from any sense of duty, any consideration for others, or any spirit of self-sacrifice, but relied solely on the direct personal interest of the enormous majority of the community. The whole success of the Revolution lay, as will be seen later, in its being an appeal from the selfishness of a clique to the selfishness of twenty millions of the population.

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CHAPTER V.

THE eve of the General Election of 1901 coincided with a definitely marked stage of our political history.

In recent sessions the Liberal leaders, goaded by the incessant attacks of the Collectivists out of doors, and relentlessly bullied by the ultra-democratic section of their supporters in the Commons, had from time to time been compelled to make a stand in favour of the various electoral reforms which they had so long patronised on the platform and burked in Parliament. Amongst these detested innovations were a real instead of a sham registration, second ballot, the charging of official election-expenses upon the constituencies, and the payment of members.* More than one of these provisions, whose ultimate tendency was of course fatal to the domination of the legislature by acquired or hereditary wealth, had been the subject of pitched battles with the Lords. But after the latter had accommodated their Liberal allies by rejecting the proposals several successive sessions, the democratic wing became too strong for its nominal leaders, and compelled them to defeat the Peers by the expedient of tacking the reforms on to the Appropriation Bill.

At this juncture certain new Acts necessitated an appeal, under conditions hitherto unprecedented, to the parliamentary constituencies.

The Liberal Government of the day, finding itself in the awkward position of having no piece of political quackery of which it could make a stalking-horse, was altogether at a loss for a cry. It shrank as usual from any real attempt to deal with urgent social questions, and was too much in sympathy with vested interests to launch itself seriously upon the programmes either of the Liberation Society or of the financial reformers. Refusing on the one hand to give the slightest assistance towards the revival of British agriculture, and on the other

* This last was of course merely a return to the ancient constitutional practice discontinued since 1681, but never abolished by statute.

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hand to diminish the strength of the property interest in either branch of the Legislature, it resolved after much shilly-shallying to go to the country on a policy of letting well alone.

These were the circumstances which decided the Collectivist leaders to take a step distinctly in advance of the policy hitherto deemed the most judicious, and to give the signal for a war to the knife with the representatives of the drone and exploiter class which did not cease until the last vestiges of the competitive régime were swept out of existence. The hour had arrived when the old oppositions of "rich" and "poor," of "employer" and "employed," of "labour" and "capital," were to be set aside as superficial, incomplete and entirely misleading definitions of the real factors in the struggle. The true forces in the social war were now about to be clearly revealed as THE PRODUCERS on the one hand and THE MONOPOLISTS OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION on the other.

Three definite lines of attack were selected by the Council of the Phalanx to signalise the entry of the League into the political arena as an independent party. These were the establishment of a system of State Agriculture, the acquisition and management of the railways by the nation, and a drastic reform of taxation and rating.

The Collectivists had never ceased to urge upon the public that the true solution of the ever-present and desperately urgent problem of "unemployed labour" lay in the establishment of a system of national and municipal farming (chiefly of the so-called "intensive" kind) whereby work of a productive character not involving special skill or knowledge could be offered to all seeking for it. They had constantly pointed to the enormous import of foreign food-products (ranging from £140,000,000 to £180,000,000 per annum), the great bulk of which could be produced at home without existing British agricultural interests being competed with. They had shown the vast increase in produce resulting from the ample provision

of labour in "spade husbandry" and market-gardening, together with the fact that more surplus labour could profitably be expended in food-growing than in any other branch of industry, with the additional advantage that in "intensive culture" human hands could never be supplanted by machinery. They had demanded State and municipal operations on a scale wide enough to absorb the whole field of unemployed and able-bodied pauper labour, and had advocated the compulsory acquisition of all lands (or the use thereof) requisite for the purpose, on fair terms. It was shown that the country could easily afford to lose over the scheme whatever sum might be saved in poor-rates; and that any further deficit which might accrue might be defrayed out of the proceeds of graduated income-tax. Moreover it was recommended that the question of a market for the produce raised should be solved (to a large extent at all events) by adopting a modified "truck" system. Under this the employés would be required to become the consumers of what they produced, and would thus provide the State or municipality with its own market.*

There was a common agreement that of the various steps towards nationalising the administration of British industries, the acquisition and management of the whole railway system of the kingdom by the State was the simplest and easiest, involving as it did no necessary dislocation of arrangements already in operation.

At the same time the compulsory extension of the very inadequate contributions to the national exchequer rendered by the over-wealthy holders of land and capital, while it would provide the means for carrying out many much-needed social reforms, called for nothing but the application of existing machinery; and a stroke of the pen would carry out the Phalanx programme of substituting for the existing swindle of indirect taxation and the enormous injustices of local rating the

* *E.g.*, the employés would be paid their wages not in cash but in credits on public universal stores, where the produce of the public farms, &c., would be disposed of at cost price before resorting to purchases in the open market.

scientific impost of graduated income-tax. The first effect of this measure might be expected to be the transfer of about £100,000,000 of taxation from the workers to the drones, with the prospective extraction from the latter of about £250,000,000 per annum in addition, as required by circumstances.

The main object of the Phalanx being to introduce the general principle of State Industrialism into our governmental system as early as possible, and thereby to commit the Cabinet of the day definitely to some form or other of co-operative production, it was considered that the three points above detailed would serve for a beginning more suitably than any others.

A formal invitation was accordingly tendered by the Council of the Phalanx, in which Ministers were called upon to accept the programme of establishing State Agriculture, together with the Nationalisation of the Railways, and the application of severely Graduated Income-tax and Succession Duties; with the alternative of being opposed by the Phalanx in the constituencies.

The Cabinet found that its Radical section had no heart at all for any Collectivist movement, either in connection with the land or the means of transport, which would have the smallest likelihood of diminishing the "margin of surplus labour." A majority of its members were either openly or tacitly in sympathy with the determination of the Upper House to resist any real reform of taxation. It therefore declined the proposal of the Phalanx (of which it probably considered audacious was too mild a description), and dissolved Parliament practically without an election cry.

The completeness of the League organisation was now for the first time given an opportunity of asserting itself. No pains had been spared during the previous session to make the actual electoral strength of the Phalanx known to its Council. It was

found that, after allowing for changes in the register, there were at least seventy-three Liberal constituencies in which the Phalanx membership (which had supported the sitting member) considerably exceeded the majority by which the seat had been won at the previous election. In each of these constituencies the Liberal candidate was invited to swallow the Phalanx programme of legislation, as an alternative to a Collectivist being nominated. In addition, he was required to pledge himself to vote against the Government on the Address should the Phalanx proposals be found to be ignored in the Queen's Speech. Without this proviso, the first demand would of course have been perfectly useless, as nothing was more common than for vote-hunting candidates to promise their support to anything and everything which they knew their leaders had not the slightest intention of permitting to become law, and which they were consequently quite safe in affecting to patronise.

Of the seventy-three candidates thus peremptorily challenged, fifteen by the advice of their committees accepted the proposal. Of these, four were defeated by their Conservative opponents and eleven were returned to Parliament as pledged Collectivists. The remaining fifty-eight refused. Ten of them were sufficiently supported to escape defeat by a handful of votes, and in the rest of the forty-eight constituencies the intrusion of the Phalanx candidates (who were put forward in every case) involved the loss of the seat to the Conservatives.

As the results in other constituencies happened to undergo no change in the aggregate, losses and gains balancing each other, the Government found its previous majority of 112 reduced through the action of the Phalanx to eight only.

Not caring to remain in office with a following that virtually represented a crushing defeat, it resigned before the House met ; and the Conservatives somewhat reluctantly consented to take office for the purpose of carrying on an *ad interim* administration.

The new ministry called Parliament together in November, and after providing for mere routine business, adjourned the session until the following February.

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The effect in the country of this first blow struck by the Phalanx in the purely political arena, following upon a long period of patient and much condemned restraint, was very similar to that of the famous Republican defeat of 1890 on the people of the United States.

The politicians of the two great parties were absolutely stupefied. That a handful of faddists and dreamers, as the Collectivists were usually styled by "practical" people, should be able to extinguish one of the most secure majorities of the generation, came upon the rival wire-pullers without the slightest preparation, and plunged their partisans into the greatest perplexity. The Conservatives dare not risk even the temporary sweets of office by a fresh dissolution while so new and dangerous an element was so little understood. The Liberals required time to face the unwelcome fact that the acceptance of Collectivism, in whole or in part, would have to be the price paid for a fresh tenure of power.

Upon the general public the effect was almost equivalent to the incipient stage of a revolution. The Phalanx and its programme, the policy of State Industrialism and the problems of its application, became at once the only incident of contemporary politics in which voters or non-voters could be persuaded to take any interest.

The result of the election went enormously to strengthen the hands of the League. It was forgotten or overlooked that its success was in reality purely of a negative character, that it had shown its ability to upset one of the great political parties without affording any indication that it could take its place, and that in fact there was scarcely a constituency in which it could have carried its candidate on any but personal grounds. The conditions of its achievement were ignored, and the fact

itself acquired almost undue prominence. Arguments which had been deemed feeble while the Phalanx was only recognised as a coterie of speculative theorists, were invested with an air of conclusiveness when it had sent a Government across the floor of the House. A programme which had been pooh-poohed as Utopian so long as it had not been made a party shibboleth, began to receive most close and urgent consideration when it was discovered to be capable of enforcing attention in such a startlingly inconvenient fashion.

In place of being treated with ridicule, neglect, or indifference, the claims of Collectivism now floated on a rising tide of popularity. For the first time the cruelly pinched lower middle class grasped at the hope of escape from the ever increasing pressure of competition. The minor clergy began to realise the ethical bearing of Collectivism upon the problems which their own vocation brought daily under their notice. They recognised the infinite advantage that would accrue to themselves as well as others in the release from straightened means and continual anxiety, and with growing unanimity and thoroughness associated themselves with the movement. The Roman Catholic Church, satisfied that the bugbear of continental Anarchism was no element in the British aspect of Collectivism, and that its educational claims could easily be safe-guarded, gave the new programme an unqualified adhesion.

The enormous majority of those who had supported, by their subscriptions and exertions, the innumerable philanthropic institutions and agencies of the United Kingdom, became in a very short time earnest advocates of a system under which they saw a far greater prospect of their various special objects being attained than could be the case through any separate efforts of their own. Many of the real promoters of temperance, as opposed to those with whom it was merely a sectarian superstition, abandoned their own special organisations in favour of the Phalanx. In six months they added a quarter of a million of members to its muster roll and some £12,000 a year to its income.

The Liberation Society was divided in its sympathies. The bulk of the opponents of a State Church were Dissenters, to whom the actual superiority in culture and tone of the Anglican body was quite as obnoxious as the artificial legal status of the Establishment. These were violently hostile to the idea of a state of things in which they would no longer be able to utilise the ostentatious wealth, which was the only element they could set up in rivalry to the invulnerable social prestige of the Church of England. To others the notion of religious equality was merely a figure of speech, and their support of the Liberation Society was dictated mainly by the hope that through its instrumentality the State Church might some day be humiliated and impoverished.

But a very large number of those whose sympathies were entirely with the Establishment on points of doctrine and organisation felt that its political aspect was wholly prejudicial to its true mission. They recognised that its partisan connection with the beer interest was a disgusting scandal, and its action as a Tory electioneering agency a simple prostitution. Its status as a mere branch of the Civil Service appeared to them a degradation rather than a privilege. Its legal possession of invidious rights was obviously a constant opportunity for the more foolish, arrogant, and bigoted of the clergy to bring the whole body of the Church into disrepute.

With these was the small but powerful and aggressive High Church faction, whose members were openly hostile to the trammels of parliamentary control, and who had always been willing to sacrifice the mere financial and legal claims of their communion if thereby its complete administrative independence could be secured.

These two classes were consequently amongst the earliest to give in their adhesion to the Phalanx, while the more rancorous of the wealthy Nonconformists, the Evangelicals, all the higher Church dignitaries, and half the Jews in the country were amongst its most active opponents. The transcendent genius of the Hebrew community in finance, commerce, and negotiation

was too marked an element in its character to permit of any hope that this powerful and interesting body would associate itself with a régime of compulsory equality of income. Nor could it be expected to concur in the proposed withdrawal of the privilege of emigration to Great Britain of which such enormous numbers of its German and Russian co-religionists had been thankful to avail themselves.

Among the great Trade-Unions and the artisan class generally the success of the Phalanx met with little sympathy. The proletariat, stupid, bigoted, and brutalised by generations of oppression, had been habitually misled by its narrow-minded and short-sighted leaders. It was as yet only partially affected by the working of the Education Acts, and consequently even now failed conspicuously to grasp the true bearing of the doctrine of State Industrialism. Almost every workman was a capitalist and slave-driver at heart. Debarred from the chance of exploiting others as he himself was exploited, his dream was by no means of co-operation, but of compelling his exploiter to allow him to share in the plunder of the public.

The old officials of the Unions were mostly men of petty ambition, anxious to secure a footing amongst the middle class, and seeking parliamentary and municipal election chiefly with this view. They had no policy, no plan of concerted action, and no definite principles either of industrial organisation or national production. Their only programme was to waste the time and funds of their members in repeated strikes, petty trade restrictions, and irritating interferences with the most obvious managerial rights of employers. They continued to pride themselves on the platform and in the press on dissociating themselves entirely from any sympathy with either the principles or details of State Industrialism. This latter proceeding subjected them as a matter of course to the degradation of being complimented by the party and property papers on their "moderation" and "practical good sense"—a depth of ignominy below which it was not easy to fall. Whenever a Union official showed such ability, or such a glimmering of the true

policy of his order, as promised to make him inconvenient to the exploiting class, he was usually extinguished as a public character by being appointed a Government inspector of something or other, when his mouth was necessarily shut.

As a result, the Unions formed no element in the political situation of the day, apart from the fifteen or twenty parliamentary seats held by their delegates. The artisan electorate, vast as it had come to be under the new registration acts, failed altogether to exercise any adequate influence upon the policy either of the municipal corporations, the local Councils, or the House of Commons.

The political crisis found the partisan press entirely unprepared to deal with a position of matters so unprecedented. For some weeks most of the newspapers occupied their time in looking out for the straws which would show how the wind was blowing. The Liberal organs, not knowing how soon they might have to turn Collectivist, made politic efforts to smother their disgust at the success of the new third party. The official prints were advised to refer to it without hostility, until the Tory chiefs could collect their scattered wits and decide upon an intelligible attitude. The rank and file of the reptile press, representing the land and capitalist interests, reviled the Phalanx in every issue, and exhausted the vocabulary of scurrility in the search for epithets applicable to the Collectivist leaders.

Such were the chief elements in the political situation when Parliament re-assembled in February, 1902.

CHAPTER VI.

THE interval that had elapsed since the adjournment was found to have slightly modified the position of Ministers. They had accepted office under the somewhat unusual condition of being in an actual minority in the Lower House, and their supporters

had been by no means unanimous in considering this course to be either dignified or politic. But the circumstances under which the late government had retired brought about an unexpected accession of strength.

Certain of the Liberal members, including those whose seats had been unsuccessfully attacked by the Phalanx, were so alarmed at the result of the Collectivist intervention in the political campaign that a hasty resolution was come to amongst them to take no action which might have the effect of precipitating a fresh election. They therefore decided to give a more or less qualified support to the Conservatives. Thirteen members of this way of thinking accordingly took their seats on the cross benches, while the converts to the Phalanx sat of course with the rest of the Liberal party.

Before the House met Ministers were therefore assured of a practical majority of eighteen, which was further increased by two during the last fortnight of the recess. This addition arose from a repetition of the tactics of the previous November. Three seats happened to fall vacant about the middle of January, one held by a Conservative and the other two by Liberals. The Phalanx attacked all three, after the usual option had been offered to the several candidates and declined. In the case of the two Liberal constituencies the same results followed as previously, the Phalanxists withdrawing enough votes from the dominant party to hand over both seats to the Conservatives. The third case displayed some special features. The Opposition candidate happened to be a brewer, and averse to any concession to the Alliance. The Government nominee was a large landowner, brother of the late member, and connected with several old Catholic families; while the Conservative part of the constituency, owing to local circumstances, was strongly High Church. The Phalanxist, aided by a contingent of Fabian lecturers, attacked the electorate with such vigour that the Liberal candidate lost heart and retired on the eve of the poll. His supporters voted for the Collectivist or abstained in about equal numbers, but practically the whole

Anglican, Romanist, and temperance vote went solid for the Phalanx. As a result, the Government candidate was defeated by a five-sixths majority.

In regard to the clerical aspect of this contest it may be mentioned that the Catholics had voted in accordance with the suggestion of their Primate. But the English bishops were furious at the action of the Ritualist curates, who had openly led the Church defection as a mark of sympathy with the general aims of the Phalanx. Their diocesan, more particularly, rebuked them in unmeasured terms. The recalcitrants, it need hardly be said, treated the episcopal thunders with the cheerful contempt which was usually displayed by High Church clerics towards their spiritual superiors, and which constituted such a pleasing commentary on their demands that the Church should be subject to ecclesiastical rather than to parliamentary authority.

The nett result for Ministers of the three contests was therefore a gain of two votes on a division. But the moral effect of losing for the first time the support of an important section of the Established Church much more than counterbalanced any advantage to the Conservative party arising from a trifling addition to their muster roll in the House.

The speech from the throne was under the circumstances perfectly colourless, and the debate on the address a mere matter of form occupying less than half an hour. Ministers put forward scarcely a pretence of legislative proposals ; and private members, seeing an exceptional chance for their own efforts at statute-making, choked the ballot-box with notices. The solitary Phalanx volunteer (to distinguish him from the eleven conscripts who had adopted Collectivism to save their seats) put four notices into the box, and was fortunate enough to get moderately good places for two. These referred to the State control of the Railways, and the proposal to empower the Board of Agriculture to carry on actual cultivation on behalf of the State. His other two notices, referring to State control over the coal industry and to graduated taxation, came out at the fag end of the ballot and were practically lost for the

session. The Railways Bill was put down for the third Wednesday in March, and the Phalanx immediately organised a series of public meetings in the constituencies to bring the merits of the question before the electorate.

It is hardly necessary to say that, during the decade which had elapsed since the foundation of the Phalanx, it had been continuously engaged in elaborating and perfecting the various details of legislation which it proposed to introduce as opportunity offered, and had fortified its economic and argumentative position by every means at its command. Every branch of its intended action was the subject of a constantly accumulating mass of statistics and practical suggestions from experts, the tabulation, digestion, and publishing of which had occupied its sub-committees during several years.

The main principles which underlay its drafts of bills were two in number. The first was that no question of purchase by the State of proprietary interests should be entertained in any case where the option of lease or management by the State was available. The second was that the equivalent in the event of purchase should in every instance take the form of terminable annuities.

The bearing of these two provisions was obvious. It was the policy of the Phalanx to postpone the actual buying out of vested interests to the very latest period possible, inasmuch as the capitalised value of those interests would steadily and rapidly decrease as the approach of a Collectivist régime became more imminent. It was also determined that whatever burden might eventally have to be incurred by the nation to ransom its land and capital, that burden should not be a perpetual millstone round its neck in the shape of interest on consols. It must entirely terminate after one or more lives had profited thereby.

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For the introduction of the Phalanx legislative proposals relating to the railway system (which included similar provisions for canals and the steamer services in connection with main-line

seaport termini) the time happened to be particularly propitious.

The great strike of 1890-1 on the North British, Caledonian, and other lines had been succeeded at frequent intervals by others of greater or less magnitude and severity. Each one of these, whatever had been the gain (if any) to the interests more immediately concerned, had caused enormous loss and suffering to classes only indirectly connected with the combatants themselves. They had inconvenienced, injured, or paralysed general business, and had resulted when the "little war" was over in no real settlement whatever of the broad questions at issue, and in no security that similar troubles would not at an early date recur. Scarcely any great railway strike had taken place without dislocating more or less the labour interests all over the kingdom. The bulk of these were of course affected without any choice of their own, and under conditions where they could not possibly gain and had everything to lose from the delay, interruption, or stoppage of supply and communication.

These continuous contests between labour and capital, in matters touching so closely the pocket, convenience, and comfort of the whole nation, were all the more exasperating to the general public because it was notorious that pacific arrangements had nearly always been prevented by the supercilious and dictatorial arrogance of a few directors and general managers who were utterly out of touch with their employés. This had the effect of creating a wide-spread and growing dissatisfaction with the whole system of private management of the railways. There was consequently every disposition to discuss proposals which offered a chance of putting an end to the parsimony, timidity, apathy, absurd restrictions, and antiquated regulations, the preferential rates, and the suicidally high charges for all kinds of traffic which even at so late a date were as characteristic as ever of the policy of our great lines of communication.

The failure in 1899 of the Chambers of Commerce (after prolonged negotiation) to induce the leading directorates to adopt the zonal system of charges which had been working so long and with such marked success in various parts of the

Continent, had accentuated the discontent of the trading community to a notable extent. Their sympathies were further alienated about the same time by a fresh extension of the infamous system so long in vogue of encouraging oversea traffic by special through rates. Under these, foreign goods and produce were distributed in Great Britain almost gratis while consigners in this country were charged freights at the legal maximum ; with the result of extinguishing more than one of our industries, and making many others unremunerative.

The main clauses of the Railways Bill provided that after a given date the shareholders, lessees, assignees, trustees, and all concerned in the ownership or control of railways, railway steamers, and canals in the United Kingdom should hold themselves in readiness to transfer the entire control of every part of the said properties and interests, actual or prospective, to the Railways Committee of the Board of Trade (a body to be nominated in the first instance by the Crown). The shareholders were to receive interest on their holdings representing the average of the preceding five years' dividends, unless special circumstances justified an appeal to the Board of Trade in favour of an increase over the said average. In the case of absolutely new capital, shareholders were to be offered the alternative of Consols interest or the return of the principal. The Committee were to have absolute power over the acquired property for a period of ten years, with the right to continue the arrangement for ten years more, or to terminate it by giving twelve months' notice to the shareholders. Other clauses provided for the return of the lines (if the tenure was not extended) in suitable working order, and for the charging of Consols interest in that event to the companies on all capital expended in the interim by the State.

The platform agitation of the Phalanx on behalf of its Bill was soon found to be almost a work of supererogation. A large majority of the Chambers of Commerce, backed up nearly unanimously by those of Agriculture and by the great mineral interests, petitioned at once in favour of the proposed legis-

lation. It was known that as far as the Opposition benches in the House were concerned the Bill would meet with hostility only from the gang of railway directors, counsel, and parliamentary solicitors who held seats in the House. These were of course all interested in the extravagant expense of the old system, in the colossal pickings to be extracted from the promotion and opposition of railway bills, and in the carefully fostered litigation between competing lines.

In Ministerial quarters a discreet silence was at first maintained with regard to the proposed measure, and the Conservative press evidently waited for instructions before committing itself. But in the Cabinet itself, stimulated by the Indian Secretary (who had always displayed a fondness for democratic somersaults), the Bill was the subject of eager discussion. The proposals it contained were not in the least of a partisan character, nor did they touch the land or property interests as a whole, either in pocket or privilege, except in so far as they provided an enormous field of patronage for the Government in power. The Bill was evidently popular, and its magnitude appealed strongly to a party which in its later traditions was nothing if not theatrical. If taken up by Ministers it would give them a programme ready-made, which might at all events tide them over the session and divert public attention from the precarious terms on which they held power. The proposed arrangements, if carried out, could hardly fail conspicuously during the short tenure of office which was all the Government could reasonably expect. If they resulted in a permanent success the Tory party could claim all the credit for it; while a breakdown would probably occur, if at all, under a Liberal administration, and attach a convenient odium to their opponents. The traditional policy of "catching the Whigs bathing and stealing their clothes," even as adapted to a much later order of things, still retained its charm for the noble Premier and his surviving colleagues of the older school; and, on the whole, tolerable unanimity was arrived at as regards the attitude to be adopted towards the Bill.

A fortnight before the second reading (no hostile amendment from the Government benches having been in the meantime put on the notice paper) the promoters of the Bill were given to understand that the order of the day would not be opposed by Ministers. It was further intimated that if an adequate amount of support to the principle of the measure were guaranteed from the left of the House, Ministers would either afford special facilities for the discussion of the Bill, or put it into the list of Government measures, at the option of the promoters. The Phalanx decided to waive the slight advantage of conducting the Bill through its stages, and accepted the second alternative, in order to secure the precedent of committing a Ministry to a purely Collectivist piece of legislation. It had previously, by a confidential canvass of the bulk of the Liberal party, ascertained that at least 250 votes would be ready to support the principle and details of the Bill.

The moment this negotiation got wind a meeting was held of the railway interest in the House. The utmost exasperation was evidenced at the probable passing of the Bill, and a "cave" was determined upon to oppose it.

The members concerned represented the most stupendous and effective organisation of commercial jobbery in Great Britain. The whole system of parliamentary procedure, in connection with obtaining legislative sanction for the annual crop of railway proposals, had for three quarters of a century been utilised to put millions of money into the pockets of a close gang of railway surveyors, solicitors, barristers, and managing directors. Every November, scores of Bills for new lines, extended powers, permission to abandon powers already granted, to alter, lease, buy, or sell property, &c., were sent in, not in the least because it was intended or desirable to utilise any of them, but solely in the interests of a small clique of professional men for whom business was thereby manufactured. Their enormous resulting charges were of course to be paid by the hoodwinked shareholders, on the recommendation of the very directors whose shares in the proceeds of these costly

shams was the only motive for their being put forward. Half the new lines of which notice was given represented simply an arrangement between the directors and lawyers of one line and those of another to provide excuses for expensive litigation (at the expense of the shareholders), which in a few years brought colossal wealth to the clique concerned.* Nothing was more common than to hear the chairman of one line claim approval for his board's vigorous resistance to the encroachments of a rival company, when the said encroachments had been quietly arranged beforehand by the lawyers on both sides as a stroke of joint prospective business. In the case of some of the metropolitan and home county lines this system had been carried on for years with an open audacity which neglected even the affectation of concealment. When to this organised brigandage was added the glory of dominating an immense enterprise, the delights of bullying dummy co-directors, wheedling dissatisfied shareholders, grinding employés, and the gratification of posing generally as little kings of the community, it will quite readily be understood that the great railway magnates were as little pleased as the lawyers with a proposal which would extinguish at a blow all their opportunities for jobbery and most of their scandalously abused privileges.

The "cave" promptly sought an interview with the Government whips, and informed them that their whole electoral and parliamentary influence would be used to oppose the Bill and the Ministry, if the latter gave its support to the measure.

As the railway interest numbered at least forty Conservatives and more than thirty Liberals, the matter was made the occasion for a little diplomacy. After a couple of days' negotiation, and much going to and fro of confidential clerks with

* *E.g.* "Twenty-six counsel appear in the matter of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company's proposed line to London. It is estimated that this involves an expenditure of £400 an hour divided among the counsel alone."—*Echo*, June 9, 1891. The parliamentary costs of the Brighton Railway averaged £4,806 per mile; of the Manchester and Birmingham, £5,190 per mile; of the Blackwall, £14,414 per mile. The solicitors' bill for the South Eastern Railway amounted to £240,000 ("Whitaker," 1891, p. 694).

confidential notes, the resources of the British constitution were found to be equal to the emergency, and the difficulty was tided over. The eight principal railway magnates were induced to accept peerages in exchange for their baronetcies. About a dozen others, with sundry lawyers, were made baronets. A few knighthoods were judiciously planted, and places on the staff or board of the new Railway Committee were freely promised. From this it resulted that the various gentlemen thus dealt with discovered the Railways Bill to be one of the most admirable measures ever introduced into the House, and such a one as each of them had long yearned for in the watches of the night. The smaller fry of the "cave" were demoralised by the defection of the mammoth jobbers, and had to resign themselves to the necessity of inventing some new form of plunder.

Under these circumstances the Bill came up for second reading. Two directors who had not been offered handles to their names put the House to the trouble of lounging through a division, being followed by three disgusted solicitors and a new member who went into the wrong lobby by mistake. The rest of the members in a somewhat small House voted for the second reading; and the Bill was referred to a Select Committee.

The further history of the measure, which passed through its stages unaltered in principle (though necessarily the subject of a good deal of technical discussion both before the Select Committee and in the House), need not be here recounted. The members of the Committee appointed to act under the Board of Trade numbered sixty. The twenty principal lines of the United Kingdom contributed one member each. Ten were nominated at the request of Government by the iron and coal trades, and thirty by the Chambers of Commerce and of Agriculture. The Bill received the Royal assent at the end of May, and the date of its coming into operation was fixed for the following 1st of November.

The second bill of the Phalanx (dealing with State Agriculture) which had been placed upon the order book, was withdrawn in view of the somewhat unlooked-for turn taken by

matters in connection with the Railways Bill ; and it was decided to devote the autumn to a campaign in its favour. The remainder of the session was characterised by little of any public interest, and closed at a much earlier date than usual.

CHAPTER VII.

The prorogation of Parliament left the State Industrialist party in a position of considerable advantage. Not only had an important tactical success been obtained in the constituencies, but a distinctly Collectivist measure of imperial magnitude had been carried through the legislature. The proverb that success succeeds received its usual illustration in the case of the Phalanx. An immense accession to the ranks of the reformers took place from amongst the middle classes (chiefly of employés), and new branches of the League arose on all sides. Business men who had little sympathy with the general scheme of State Industrialism were delighted with the first of its details which had been forced upon their attention. Moreover, there appeared very little to criticise in the two or three others to which prominence was now to be given, the proposed modification of the Agricultural Board being one of them. Neither of the purely political factions saw their way to a popular cry at the moment, and were in fact too much confused by the events of the session to settle upon any programme. Many people who were constitutionally unable to keep themselves from fussing over one or other of the parties in the political arena, were decidedly alienated by this indecision on the part of their usual idols. They consequently took up a convenient enthusiasm for the new school as a stop-gap, and added largely to its muster roll and its income.

During the recess the growing interest in the Phalanx was maintained by its leaders with the utmost energy. The *modus operandi* found so successful in the parliamentary constituencies

was applied to the election of district, borough, and county councillors. In many cases the Phalanx ran its own nominees with the intention of securing election. In the others it threatened sitting Liberals or Conservatives with a third candidate, in order to secure adhesions. As a result it carried about seventy per cent. of its own candidates, and was the means of handing over more than half of the seats of sitting members to their political rivals. The bulk of the victims were Conservatives; and their successful opponents were naturally disposed to go as far as they dared in support of the dangerous free-lances who had upset the sitting members, and were equally ready, if occasion arose, to upset their successors.

In November the Railways Act came into operation. The zonal system was under consideration by the Committee of the Board of Trade, and a considerable scheme of re-adjustment of freights for perishable and other food products had been inaugurated. But the Committee preferred to get familiar with its assumption of general control before introducing any fundamental changes, and in the meantime confined itself to abolishing all the idiotic restrictions on the purchase, use, and transfer of tickets to which the lines had so long and so obstinately clung. It introduced the American system of luggage-checking, reduced all return tickets to a fare and a half without restriction as to date of either journey, gave unlimited choice of routes as far as available, and allowed trips to be broken at pleasure by free exchange of ticket at the stopping station. Passenger fares throughout the whole country were based on a maximum of 1d. a mile for palace cars, and ½d. a mile for the ordinary carriages—the old second, third, and so-called "parliamentary" services being done away with. We may here say that the lowered tariff began almost at once to justify its introduction, for with no addition to the aggregate dead weight carried the passenger traffic nearly doubled itself before the winter was over.*

* It was estimated in 1890 that eight empty seats in the aggregate were carried to each one occupied, and that 7,751,404,800 empty seats travelled 26,011,238,400 miles per annum. (R. A. Cooper, in "*Politics for the People*," page 111).

The general arrangements worked very smoothly, and the public were delighted at the reduced fares, the absence of worry about luggage, and the privilege of buying tickets at any time convenient to the traveller. The employés were restored to the enjoyment of family life by the establishment of the eight hours' day; and every one asked his neighbour why all this had not been done years ago.

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The first week in December was signalised by the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Liverpool, and a deputation from the Phalanx addressed the delegates as soon as the Report was disposed of. Considerable irritation had been expressed by a large section of the Liberals at the disastrous results to the party following on the action of the Collectivists in the general election. But this failed altogether to deter the Leaguers from intimating their fixed determination to continue the same policy on every suitable occasion. They pointed out the ease with which a considerable administrative reform had been carried out, and pooh-poohed the useless adherence of the Liberal party to the effete and tinkering policies which constituted their official programme. They demonstrated the growing sympathy with the State Industrialist movement, as evidenced by the enormous accessions to the Phalanx muster-roll; and denounced, amid cheers from the numerous Collectivist delegates, the continued truckling of the Liberal leaders to the land and capitalist element in their ranks as a treason to the nation. Finally they announced that their own efforts were to be next directed to the establishment of State Agriculture, and the application of a severely graduated scale to the income-tax and the succession duties of all kinds. It was intimated that every candidate who declined to support these measures might expect to be opposed by them both at the parliamentary and local elections. They then left the Conference to discuss the situation.

The bulk of the delegates were not inclined to object to the proposal that the State should turn farmer, although, as a practical measure, it was naturally one of the last things with which a purely political faction could be expected to sympathise. The demand, however, for graduated taxation divided the Conference at once into two hostile camps. A sham graduation, a mere tinkering at the one already so long in operation, would have been adopted without much hesitation. But a scheme which might operate to reduce the wealth of the wealthy classes by £500,000,000 per annum touched the pockets of the capitalist Liberals and the surviving Whig interest too closely to be tolerated for a moment. The advanced democratic section, who saw nothing but a perfectly scientific policy in the proposed fiscal reform, constituted a majority of the Conference. But as they were anxious that if possible some programme or other should be accepted with reasonable unanimity before the delegates finally separated, the somewhat unusual course was adopted of adjourning the debates till January, in the hope that the antagonism of the malcontents might in the interval be modified.

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The Phalanx published its two bills before Christmas, and prepared itself for a direct struggle with the territorial and mercantile aristocracies.

The Agricultural Board (Extension of Powers) Bill provided for the cultivation by the State of waste, unoccupied, and (if desirable) occupied lands, with special reference to high class "petite culture" and so-called market gardening. The land was to be taken wherever most convenient in view of surplus labour calling for employment. The owners were to be paid a rent representing the average rent of the preceding ten years. If the land had been in the market for ten years without finding a tenant, or had remained unutilised by the owner for the same space of time, nothing was to be paid for the use of it. If tenanted a portion of the time only, the aggregate rents

would be divided by ten to find the State rent.* If occupied by the owner, his own estimate of its value for income-tax purposes was to form the basis of the rental valuation. An appeal was provided for cases in which the above method of averaging would operate unfairly. Special clauses arranged for the universal utilisation of town sewage, and authorised any necessary expenditure in works, plant, or transport required to carry this important part of the scheme into effect.

The landlords' indignation at the provision by which their systematic swindling of the Exchequer was to be finally avenged, and their own farcical estimate of their land-values turned against them, sank into insignificance beside the storm evoked by the Taxes and Duties Amendment Bill. The operative clauses of this measure were only three in number, but they constituted the most complete financial revolution ever proposed in this country.

The first clause provided that all incomes whatever should be taxed at the rate of 1d. per pound up to the first hundred pounds of assessable income, and an additional penny per pound for each additional hundred ; the several hundreds to be taxed separately in succession.†

The second clause extinguished the old system of exemption and abatement based on amount of income (probably the most grotesquely unjust and stupid feature in the whole of our unjust

* *E.g.*, a farm on which for two years a rent of £100 had been paid, while it had failed to yield any rent during the previous eight years, would be rented at £20 a year by the State ; if the same rent had been paid for five years instead of two, then the State rent would be £50 a year.

† *E.g.* The taxation on an assessable income of £500 per annum would be :

Tax on	1st	£100	at	1d.	in the	£	equals	£0	8	4
,,	,, 2nd	,,	,,	2d.	,,	,,	,,	0	16	8
,,	,, 3rd	,,	,,	3d.	,,	,,	,,	1	5	0
,,	,, 4th	,,	,,	4d.	,,	,,	,,	1	13	4
,,	,, 5th	,,	,,	5d.	,,	,,	,,	2	1	8
Total taxation on £500 of income equals								**6**	**5**	**0**
As against old tax at 6d. in the pound ,,								**12**	**10**	**0**

[This would be irrespective of at least £100 of exemption.]

The tax on the two hundred and fortieth £100 of any income would of course be at the rate of 240d. in the £ (*i.e.*, £100).

and stupid fiscal arrrangements), and substituted one of exemption or abatement by burdens. Under this scheme every citizen was exempted from taxation on £100 of annual income in respect of his own personal maintenance ; on an additional £50 in respect of either wife, father, mother, brother, or sister dependent on him for support ; and on a further £25 in respect of each of his children not in receipt of a separate income.

The third clause abolished all existing stamp, legacy, probate, account, and succession duties without exception, and provided that every transfer of property of any kind whatever (not being domestic goods and chattels or ordinary articles of merchandise) by deed of gift, inheritance, or succession, should pay a stamp duty of one-tenth of 1 per cent. for the first hundred pounds of value, increasing at the rate of an additional one-tenth per cent. for each separate additional hundred.* Deeds of gift were included in order to prevent as far as possible the evasion of the death duties by transfers of property during the lifetime of the owner. A sub-section of this clause provided for the compulsory registration under heavy penalties of every transfer as above, or by sale, of the same kinds of property, at the time of transfer, with the name and address of the transferee as an additional security for the collection of income-tax.

The remainder of the Bill suggested the regulations under which the above provisions should be carried out. Attempted evasions of the third clause were met by the proposal that successive gifts of property by the same person during any three financial years were to be subject to duty as a single transfer under the progressive scale ; while testated estates were to be dutiable as a whole and not in respect of separate bequests.

* *E.g.* The stamp duty on any transfer amounting to £500 would be :

For the	1st	£100	at	one-tenth	per cent.	equals	£0	2	0
„ „	2nd	„	„	two-tenths	„ „	„	0	4	0
„ „	3rd	„	„	three-tenths	„	„	0	6	0
„ „	4th	„	„	four-tenths	„ „	„	0	8	0
„ „	5th	„	„	five-tenths	„ „	„	0	10	0
					Total...	...	£1	10	0

The stamp duty on the tenth £100 of any transfer would thus be at the rate of ten-tenths or £1 per cent. ; that on the thousandth £100 would be £100 per cent.

It was obvious that the effect of this Bill would be to relieve small incomes and small inheritances from any appreciable direct taxation and duty whatever, while people of moderate means would bear only the lightest burden. Incomes would have to reach £1200 a year, at least, before they paid an equivalent to the old 6d. in the pound; bequests would not pay as much as 1 per cent. till they reached £1000. But the differential scale would have an increasingly sweeping effect on the larger amounts of income and succession. It could be seen at a glance that everything beyond £24,000 a year of income would disappear in taxation; while in the case of property transferred by death or gift, the State would absorb everything beyond £100,000 in value.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the Phalanx considered the second measure it proposed to be the necessary corollary of the first. A system of agriculture of the highest class and on sound scientific lines was to be inaugurated, which was intended not only to extinguish the usual foreign import of £160,000,000 worth of food per annum, but to approach sufficiently near our estimated possibilities of a home production of £486,000,000* a year to provide the most ample supply to every head of the whole population. Such a system would not only at the outset, but for several years later, involve a large expenditure in main drainage, irrigation and sewage works, railways, tramways, rolling stock, implements, houses for the cultivators, and other items of capital account. This expenditure was destined to repair the incalculable mischiefs wrought by the decay of agriculture, and to rehabilitate the victims of the colossal brigandage so long and so mercilessly carried on by the land and labour thieves of the kingdom; and it was palpable that the robbers were the people to provide the necessary funds.

Trenchant as were the provisions of the Taxes and Duties Amendment Bill, it was never seriously pretended that any injustice, much less any hardship, could arise under its operation.

* See pages 33-4.

The principle of it was nothing new, and some feeble, clumsy, and vicious anticipation of it had been a feature of every income-tax arrangement ever since the impost was introduced in 1842. The present measure did nothing more than turn an existing sham into a prospective reality. A man was not reduced to inconvenient penury by being cut down to the enjoyment of a nominal* £24,000 a year, nor need any waiter for a dead man's shoes feel it an inexcusable outrage that his expectations should be limited to a gross sum of £100,000. Existence would probably be supportable even under these altered conditions. It would still be possible for the victim of Collectivist legislation to congratulate himself that he was not as one of the unlucky two millions and a quarter of his countrymen, who (thanks to him and his fellows) woke up every morning without the wherewithal to pay for their breakfast. That the new Tax Bill would have as its secondary result the prompt extinction of the landed aristocracy, by an automatic process of restoring its stolen acres to the State, was for the present a matter of comparatively little importance.

The effect of the Phalanx sessional programme was prompt and decided. Before the adjourned meeting of the National Liberal Federation took place, five bye-elections occurred. Two of these were caused by Conservative successions to the peerage, the others by the deaths of two Liberal members and the retirement of a third. The Opposition candidates for the Liberal constituencies made a virtue of necessity, joined the Phalanx, and were returned by overwhelming majorities. In the other two cases the League ran its own candidates, who were assisted by the bulk of the Anglican clergy, all the Catholics and the temperance party, and won easily.

The Federation began to feel a lively dread that, unless a vigorous programme were adopted, its occupation as a party organisation would be gone. When the conference reassembled, a large majority of the delegates (many of them urged on by

* The maximum nett income enjoyable (after deducting tax) would be £11,950 8s. 3¾d.

fresh instructions from their associations) insisted on the adoption of the Phalanx sessional programme as a question of self-preservation. The minority left the Conference without voting, and a final split in the Liberal party was thus inaugurated. A meeting of Liberal M.P.'s was arranged on the eve of the reassembling of Parliament, which resulted in about fifty members connected with the land and capitalist interests retiring to the cross benches or joining the ranks of the Government.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE commencement of the year 1903 was marked by a somewhat interesting episode, which may perhaps be conveniently referred to in this place.

Among the diatribes with which the Phalanx was habitually assailed from a variety of quarters, the epithet of "Anarchist," as applied to the Collectivist leaders, was a prime favourite, having the supposed advantages of epitomising every term of abuse and of conveying to a well-regulated mind the most exhaustive condemnation which the English language was capable of expressing. As in many similar instances, it happened that even if the description had been intended to be complimentary it was about as inaccurate as could well be devised.

It may be explained, for the benefit of those unacquainted with the political by-ways of the last century, that the term Anarchism arose in connection with certain social theories promulgated by Bakunin, Guillaume, Réclus, Gautier, Kropotkin, and others. These reformers, many of them as earnest, self-sacrificing, and utterly disinterested devotees to the welfare of their fellows as ever drew breath, had examined and analysed the vicious, hypocritical, and thoroughly brutal combination of law and custom which dominated the bulk of so-called civilised communities, together with the sins of omission and commission

against society or the individual which pervaded every rank of the social organism. They found legislation of almost inconceivable ferocity, cruelty, and injustice imposed by rulers upon the governed from the very dawn of history. Concurrently there was the testimony of the ages to the uniform prevalence of every species of folly, misery, crime, and infamy amongst one party or the other, or both. The two groups of circumstances presented themselves to their minds in the relation of cause and effect. From these premises the conclusion followed naturally that if moral degradation was caused by law, society must dispense with law if it was ever to be purified and elevated. It was easy to develop this position, and to urge that when society was entirely uncontrolled save by the force of public opinion, when unjust penal and coercive statutes no longer irritated men by supporting caste distinctions, corrupt privilege, and religious intolerance, or drove them to crime by the maintenance of frightful inequalities in wealth, by the sale of justice, and by the virtual serfdom of the poor, the inherent good sense and good feeling of men might and would be successfully appealed to. It was argued that no one would be poor, except through his own fault, when law no longer exhausted ingenuity in devising means to add to the wealth of the wealthy; that no one would commit a crime when he suffered no injustice at the hands of court, statute, or officer of the State; and that in effect no one would injure others when others could not use the law to injure him. Therefore from these and similar considerations it was deduced that the remedy for all social ills was the removal of restrictive and coercive legislation—a removal which was to be effected by moral suasion (producing a changed public opinion) or by physical force, revolt, dynamite, and chaos, according to the individual temperaments of the apostles of the new gospel. To this programme the name of Anarchism* came at a certain date to be given.

We need not stop here to discuss the validity of premises from which the Anarchist teachers derived the conclusions to the

* (Greek) *An*—without, *Arche*—government, head, or chief.

support of which they devoted their whole lives, sacrificed their fortunes and health, passed the bulk of their days in prison or at the galleys, and in many cases ended them as exiles.* But it may be at once remarked that the new doctrine was one which immensely gratified the criminal classes, especially in France, which was practically its birthplace. Every Parisian rough, thief, footpad, or cut-throat, every subject of the cares of the criminal police, and the whole army of ineffable scoundrels who appeared from no one knew where in the periodical *émeutes* for which the capital and large towns were so unfortunately famous, heard of the Anarchist gospel with surprise and delight. They were charmed to find that they had been sympathising with a social philosophy without knowing it, and a large section of them avowed themselves Anarchists to a man.

This extremely inconvenient adhesion to the doctrines of the Bakunin school operated most disastrously on the Collectivist propaganda abroad, and to a limited extent in this country also. Nothing delighted the dregs of the Parisian gaol-birds more than to profess the profoundest admiration for the Anarchist philosophy, to applaud the principle of co-operative labour, to pose as a wing of the State Industrialist party, and to force themselves upon meetings and societies of the Collectivists, partly as champions and partly as candid friends, whose criticism and advice must necessarity be welcome and serviceable. For years the Individualist parties abroad took advantage of this exasperating nuisance, insisted upon classing the Collectivist school of economists with the "petroleurs" and "dynamitards," and affected to recognise no appreciable distinction between them.

One curious phase of the subject was the establishment, in various parts of London, of small cliques of Anarchists, whose talk was of gore and of brotherhood, who detested everything connected with State Industrialism, and who left nothing undone to injure or obstruct the movement in its favour.

* Or were butchered by Republican troops, as in the Paris Commune.

Finding it unassailable by argument, these cliques resorted to the ingenious expedient of posing as Collectivists themselves. They preached in that capacity a gospel of bloody civil war and bomb-throwing, free love and community of women ; proposed the abrogation of all punishment for crime and of all coercive or compulsory arrangements of any kind ; demanded entire liberty for every man to do his best or his worst or nothing at all ; and invited the public to accept their programme as an exposition of Collectivism.

Whatever may be thought of the morality of this device, its success was undoubted ; and for years this obscene burlesque of National Co-operation was accepted quite seriously by a simple-minded section of the British public. Even amongst intelligent people in this country a vague notion existed that Anarchism and Collectivism had some remote points of contact ; and it required frequent correction by pointing out that the doctrine of Bakunin lay at the very opposite pole to that of the State Industrialist school, whose programme involved not the abolition of law but the establishment of the most elaborate legislative machinery ever projected by man.

Nevertheless a lingering indistinctness on the subject continued to make itself felt, and during the ten or fifteen years preceding the date at which we have arrived, scattered English Anarchists of the so-called "dynamite school" persevered in making attempts to attract public attention amongst the artisan clubs, at election and other public meetings, and in a section of the press. These were certain of the spouters at street corners, of the rampant howlers at public house debates, and of the orators in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoons, whose policy as expressed on these occasions was to hang the employers, capitalists, and bankers, to abolish the Lords and proclaim a Republic instanter, to expel the aristocracy from the country, to "arm for freedom," to set London in flames, to blow up Windsor Castle, and generally speaking "to down with everything." These fiery apostrophes were usually addressed to a ring of the unwashed, who smoked their pipes and

contemplated the perspiring apostles with an apathetic and fishlike gaze until their patience was exhausted, or until a fight between two dogs diverted their attention elsewhere. Seeing that the reception of these missionary efforts, whatever might be the status or locality of the audience, never on any occasion displayed much beyond utter indifference or contemptuous incredulity, there was standing matter for curiosity amongst observant people, Collectivists especially, as to what it all meant. The theory that any direct purpose was expected to be served by these burlesque utterances was obviously quite inadmissible.

The explanation, delayed for many years, was accidentally forthcoming at the beginning of the year 1903.

As the foreign Anarchists were pretty uniformly desperate criminals first and social reformers afterwards, it was a natural rule amongst the police of France and Germany to squeeze out of their respective countries, on political grounds, those suspected persons whom they were unable from lack of evidence to prosecute for offences against the ordinary criminal law. This led to considerable colonies of the philosophers in question settling in London and Switzerland, whence they kept up a correspondence with sympathetic friends and fellow practitioners at home. As the spy and "agent-provocateur" system was too well known in continental criminal circles to have much chance of success with these acute gentry if carried out by compatriots, it was arranged by the foreign police that the method in question should be pursued in London by means of English hired informers. The Anarchist trick was found to be very effective in giving the spies access to the society and gatherings of the exiled birds of prey, and it was continued with success down to the period of which we write. All the professed English "dynamitards" (with the exception of a handful of well-meaning visionaries) were merely spies in the pay of the foreign police, and their particular form of Anarchism was simply the card of introduction by which they obtained information as to plans and persons on the continent to be utilised in due course by their employers.

The revelation of this system of vulgar treachery came about through a squabble between two well known English Anarchists as to who was entitled to the credit and consequent reward of breaking up a gang of banknote forgers at Lyons through the information conveyed to the Paris prefecture of police. It naturally extinguished "dynamite Anarchism" in this country, and the small group of old women who had affected to consider this school a sign of the times were glad to let the subject sink into the oblivion which its utter insignificance deserved.

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The opening of the parliamentary session of 1903 was delayed till the end of February. In explanation of this departure from routine, Ministers stated that they proposed to make a change with regard to the duration of the ordinary sessions of the two Houses, which had been repeatedly urged upon Parliament, and had once at least been recommended by a Royal Commission. This was to abandon the long and usually wearisome continuous sitting from January or February to August, and to follow the example of most foreign and colonial legislatures of the day in holding a spring session during March, April, and May, with an autumn session in October and November. Ministers had little to announce in addition beyond a mysterious allusion to certain proposed Bills dealing with the tenure and sale of land. They affected to be impressed with the necessity of giving very much more time to the discussion of the Indian Budget than had previously been customary; while they intimated that no legislative proposals would be introduced till supply had been practically disposed of. Credit was taken for the success attendant on the new railway administration; and the altered régime was of course described as being of an essentially Conservative character.

The Phalanx members had taken the precaution to include their two principal notices amongst about twenty bogus ones, in order to improve their chances in the ballot. They were thus able to neutralise the rather conspicuous ill-fortune met

with by the Agriculture and Taxation Bills in obtaining places almost at the end of the list. Two bogus notices came out in the first dozen, and the main measures were placed second to these ; the earlier date being assigned to the Agriculture Bill.

The ministerial programme was initiated by a set of proposals to facilitate the transfer of land, which copied pretty closely the usual Liberal suggestions in the direction of the so-called "Free Land" policy. The incessant attacks of the Phalanx on this and the other purely quack measures of reform, to which the Liberal party so fatuously clung, had convinced the Tory property-owners that in some way or other this policy must serve their own interests ; and their long patronage of this particular sham made it rather difficult for the Liberal Opposition to invent an excuse for resisting the Government now. The Phalanx was under no such restraint, and of course renewed its habitual denunciation of any facilities for multiplying the landlord class ; but Ministers having the support of the votes or abstentions of more than a third of the Opposition, carried their proposals into committee a week before the Agriculture Bill was due.

The attitude to be adopted towards this plank of the Phalanx platform had not yet been decided upon by the Cabinet. The Collectivists had appealed at once to the pockets and patriotism of the ratepaying community. They had shown that innumerable trades would be benefited by the various works necessitated by the proposed operations, and had pointed out that as nothing else could relieve the rates of the burden of £17,000,000 annually spent on maintaining the unemployed and destitute, the experiment would pay even if it involved a loss equal to the sum quoted, seeing that the union buildings all over the country could be partially available for other purposes. A large number of landowners were sick of having farms thrown on their hands year after year, and saw little in the Bill to object to except its rental proposals. Others thought that the experiment, if tried, must fail in the end, and that in the meantime their land might as well be highly cultivated at the public

expense, to say nothing of the permanent improvements which they hoped they could still manage to appropriate when they resumed possession. It is true only those totally blind to the current of public affairs could entertain the latter expectation; but the influence of habit was not without its effect even in this instance.

Reluctant to pose as the opponents of anything distinctly popular with a large body of non-partisan electors, and inclined to expect a good deal from the chapter of accidents, the Cabinet eventually resolved to hold aloof from the discussion of the Agriculture Bill, and to bring all their forces to bear on the rejection of the Taxation Bill by such a majority as should effectually quell the boundless audacity of its promoters.

The Agriculture Bill was preceded, as we have said, by another order of the day placed there to act as a "warming-pan." This was accordingly withdrawn in order to bring on its successor. The latter was moved and seconded with the curtest of explanations, as its promoters saw that nothing was to be gained by speechifying from their part of the House. Nearly the whole of the weeded Opposition attended to support the Bill, while about a hundred of the Conservatives and renegade Liberals left the House without voting. As a result, the second reading was defeated by a majority of about a dozen. This was not altogether to the satisfaction of Ministers, although they had not ventured to indicate even a friendly neutrality as the line desirable for their supporters; and the closeness of the division tended, as was inevitable, to strengthen the Phalanx in the country.

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The Taxes and Duties Amendment Bill was due just before the Whitsuntide recess. In regard to this proposal, the Government felt secure in taking up an uncompromising stand, as it was well known that not more than a dozen members of the Upper House would consent to such a measure being introduced, much less debated or dealt with as an open question.

Every vote within reach was whipped up for and against the second reading. No pretence was made even of talking out the Bill; and after a debate confined entirely to changes on the words open robbery and confiscation, rung by the Government sympathisers, the division resulted in the defeat of the Bill by 300 votes against 269. This was one of the largest votes ever recorded in the House, being within eleven of the whole aggregate of members. It was afterwards noted with interest as being the last occasion on which a Conservative Government ever had the opportunity of opposing a second reading.

In the meantime Ministers had been preparing a grand *coup*. Just before the House rose for the Whit-week recess the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought in a measure which took away the breath of such of the old-fashioned Tories as still survived in the Commons. This was nothing more nor less than a Land Purchase Bill for Great Britain, on even worse lines than the measures which had formed part of the Irish policy of both the Liberal and Tory Governments of fifteen and twenty years before. The Bill (as became a Conservative measure) was strictly permissive: *i.e.*, its objectionable features were compulsory, and such provisions as might have been of any public service were merely optional. Divested of technicalities and points of form, it was practically a Bill for compelling the State to buy the land of any owner who was disposed to sell, and it fixed the price definitely at 27 years' purchase of the annual value. Sellers were to be paid in settled annuities or consols according as the estates were entailed or unentailed.

The real reasons for the introduction of this burlesque of land reform were of course kept in the background, and Ministers affected to consider their proposals as quite sufficient to meet all the legitimate demands of the Allotments Association, the Land Restoration League, and the Land Nationalisation Society. They urged that experience had shown both individuals and corporate bodies to be at a disadvantage in endeavouring to

acquire land under existing conditions ; and that it was better to afford direct encouragement for landowners to part with a portion of their holdings to the Crown. The latter could then facilitate those arrangements for the public benefit, which had hitherto been found to be impracticable. A payment slightly in excess of the nominal market value might therefore be proposed with advantage, as in no other legitimate way could owners be tempted to part with freehold or copyhold rights.

As a matter of fact this measure had been forced on the Cabinet by some of the more acute and far-seeing of the great territorial peers. These had recognised, much more fully and distinctly than the rest of their order, that the downfall of landlordism and capitalism was imminent. The incredible strides taken by public opinion within the last few years, and the fact that a measure of financial reform like the Graduated Taxation Bill—amounting to a revolution of itself—should have been supported by nearly three hundred representatives of the people (some of them elected on the very programme in question, while most of the others had been directly instructed by their constituencies) had thoroughly aroused the more intelligent of the land magnates to a sense of their danger. The proposed Bill was simply an endeavour to make a way of escape by means of a new outrage on the long-suffering public. The provision permitting owners to exact such a high capitalisation value for their holdings was essential to the full realisation not only of their colossal original plunder, but of its future enhancement in the case of town values. They could thus convert their present and prospective wealth into a form permitting of its gradual withdrawal from the country, where it was likely to be subject to attack, and could thereby leave the nation to bear the burden of its ransom in perpetuity.

When the Whit-week holiday was over, the Cabinet prepared to use all the resources at its command to secure the early stages of its new proposal. After a formidable attack from the Opposition, the Land Bill was forced to a second reading by a majority of 110. It was announced that the rest of the

session would be devoted to the Indian Budget, and that Committee on the Land Bill would be taken on the re-assembling of the House in October. A fortnight later, under the new arrangements, Parliament was adjourned till the autumn.

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The full bearing of the Government proposals, involving as they did urban as well as agricultural property, could only be brought home to the public by an exhaustive statistical education in the figures and facts bound up with the whole subject; and the Phalanx now prepared itself for a systematic platform campaign in the recess.

The unwarrantable springing upon the country of a measure previously unheard of, and utterly beyond the cognisance of the electors on the occasion of the last appeal to the constituencies, was considered by many Conservatives to have been an impolitic step on the part of the Government; although it would have been difficult for the ministerial supporters to say much in favour of the Bill even had it been introduced in a more seemly fashion. On the other hand, a measure by which an infamous aggression on national rights was to receive a perpetual sanction, the property of the country removed from all possibility of redemption, adjustive taxation of mischievous wealth evaded, and injustices within a measurable distance of removal continued indefinitely, was one against which popular indignation was easily aroused. It was shown that before the State could resume possession of its own soil a sum might be demanded which for London alone would certainly not be less than £1,100,000,000* and for Great Britain as a whole at least £5,400,000,000.† The very object for which this enormous ransom was demanded (in the form stipulated) was that it might be removed out of the country in order to secure immunity

* The annual value in 1891 was £39,994,738 (Quinquennial Valuation, 1891).

† This was rented in 1892 at £199,300,000 per annum (Inland Revenue Return).

from taxation, at the risk of reducing the country to the rank of a third-rate power and of burdening it with a debt which our remotest posterity would be unable to pay.

The ministerialists pooh-poohed these figures as mere rhetoric. They asserted that not only was there no disposition on the part of the great landowners to sell, but that the Land Bill offered the only available means by which land could be obtained from them for public purposes. They charged the Collectivists with turning their backs on their own policy of furthering the State ownership of the soil ; and declared that any other plan of land nationalisation than their own would mean confiscation, repudiation, civil war, chaos, and the end of the world generally.

The platform warfare continued with unabated vigour all through the summer ; and public attention was from this cause diverted from an event by which, as it afterwards turned out, the struggle between Collectivism and Individualism was led to assume its decisive phase.

This was the formation of the great Coal Syndicate of 1903.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING the previous fifteen or sixteen years the syndicate or trust system, so long dominant in the United States, had attained a considerable area of development on this side of the Atlantic. Innumerable interests had coalesced, groups of traders, wholesale and retail, had been continually formed, and in certain lines of business the control exercised over producer, distributor, and consumer amounted to absolute despotism. Unscrupulous pressure was employed to gain over or crush individual firms standing in the way of combination, and prices were forced up to a point only short of handing over the trade to foreign competition. In fact, it was recognised by the public that nothing but the absence of import duties from our

fiscal system could have enabled the general consumer to bear up under the weight of the monopolist demands. In consequence of this, the syndicates had of recent years displayed an unmistakable leaning towards the re-imposition of a protective tariff.

The colliery interests happened to be amongst those which had so far failed to amalgamate successfully. Several attempts had been made, notably in 1897 and 1899, to unite all the coalowners in one giant monopoly; but difficulties about terms and local jealousies had led to their collapse. In the summer of 1903, however (various changes of ownership and management having occurred in the interval), a union of all the British colliery interests was effected, almost unknown to the public at large; and the way was cleared for the most pregnant industrial crisis of modern times.

As soon as the great organisation of the Coal Syndicate was ascertained to be an accomplished fact, the Phalanx leaders took instant action. They pointed out the probable results of the crushing combination with which the industrial community was now threatened, and made a last attempt to rouse the Trade-Unions to a sense of the folly of their short-sighted and bigoted adherence to the traditions of Individualism. The Miners' Associations were specifically addressed by manifesto, and the colliers were urged to put themselves right with the public by forbidding any rise in the price of coal, under threat of leaving work *en masse* if it were attempted—a step which, while of course not diminishing the inconvenience to the consumers, would have prevented the owners making any profits. The Railway Employés' Unions were appealed to in the same sense, and efforts were made to induce the various great trades which relied on British coal for their continuous working to bring pressure to bear on the Government to intervene in the threatened struggle.

No successful results followed these representations. The Trade-Union officials, always jealous and suspicious of the Phalanx, were able, though with difficulty, to overcome the

tendency now becoming manifest amongst the more thoughtful of the rank and file of the Unionists in favour of the State Industrialist programme. The offer of a heavy percentage of the Syndicate's profits, operating in the form of a sliding scale of wages, with a settled minimum, proved quite sufficient to obliterate any recollection of the hearty support the miners had received from the public in the infamous lock-out of 1893 and in other more recent struggles. The various Associations were therefore persuaded without difficulty to join the Syndicate in its proposed career of brigandage.

On the re-assembling of Parliament the Phalanx members asked for an opportunity of bringing up the question of the Coal Syndicate, and, on being refused, moved the adjournment of the House in the usual way to get the floor. Government was urged to bring in a bill forthwith to acquire entire control over the colliery property of the United Kingdom, even in a purely formal shape and as a temporary measure, in order to check the probable policy of the new trust; and the nearly unanimous aid of the Opposition was promised to secure the carrying out of this recommendation.

As nineteen-twentieths of the collieries were owned on the Conservative benches in one House or the other, and at least a dozen members of the Syndicate were either in the Cabinet or held minor official posts, the proposal of the Collectivists was received with hilarious contempt. Ministers positively declined to interfere in any way with private trade or with the traders' arrangements for conducting their own business. With one or two honourable exceptions, their supporters treated the whole question as one altogether outside the scope of Parliamentary action, and the Phalanxists were defeated by a somewhat reduced majority.

The Land Purchase Bill was then pushed forward, and as a matter of course became the subject of every kind of attack that the forms of the House permitted. Repeated attempts to re-introduce the question of the Coal Syndicate were also made, and with all the advantages on the side of Government

it was the last week in November before the third reading could be taken and the Bill sent up to the Lords.

In the meantime the effects of the Syndicate were beginning to be felt, and the anticipations of its opponents to be amply verified. The price of coal was raised on an average three shillings per ton per week throughout October, November, and December. In the middle of the latter month the historical great frost of 1903-1904 set in, and the most terrible winter endured by the British people since the famines and plagues of the Middle Ages was fairly inaugurated.

At the outset of the advance in price the miners' Unions had the alternative of saving the community from a merciless exercise of capitalist tyranny and extortion, or of covering themselves with infamy by sharing in the monopolist plunder. The latter course, despite a final and strenuous appeal from the Phalanx, was adopted, and the miners' wages, under the sliding scale, began to approach the historic "thirty pieces of silver" per day, earned by the betrayal of their brother workers. As the Syndicate had entered into provisional contracts with all the leading coalmasters abroad to meet a possible difficulty with their own employés, little or no relief could be forthcoming from foreign supplies in competition. The Syndicate and the miners were thus entire masters of the situation.

* * *

The Land Purchase Bill made rapid progress through the Upper House. As the Liberal party in that branch of the Legislature had practically ceased to exist some years before, the peers were a little erratic in their minor phases of action, although a Conservative Government had, as a rule, only the semblance of criticism to expect in that party paradise. Nevertheless, mutterings of the impending storm were not altogether unheard even in the serene precincts of the woolsack. Many old-fashioned peers were disgusted at the connection of certain of their coroneted brethren with the Coal Syndicate, and considered that even if a noble lord chose to

sell coals for a living he might at least abstain from dirtying his fingers with tricks of trade. Half-a-dozen veterans who entertained a lamentably late remorse for their reception of the Sweating Commission's Report, and of other more recent evidence of labour miseries, openly threatened to throw in their lot with the Phalanx if the peerage was going to become a sink of commercial jobbery. All this was no particular argument against the Land Bill, but it served to damp any aristocratic enthusiasm for the measure which its unscrupulous protection of the vested interests of brigandage might otherwise have aroused. To the surprise of Ministers and the public, several bishops displayed the rudiments of a political conscience, and in consequence kicked over the traces of the property coach. On the occasion of the second reading, the unprecedented spectacle was presented of a dozen spiritual peers, despite all the blandishments of the Conservative whips, voting in accordance with common honesty and justice, and joining the few non-contents in the so-called Opposition lobby.

The morning after the division, the Phalanx issued the following manifesto:

TO THE NATION.

The Land Purchase Bill, now before the House of Lords (with the prospect of becoming law forthwith), is a measure compelling you to buy back the national soil, of which you have been robbed, at a cost of over £5,000,000,000.

This measure has been forced through the Representative House by a Ministry which is maintained in power by the votes of men whom you elected to oppose it, in spite of the protest of 270 of your representatives.

The measure was unheard-of at the last election, and the electorate has had no collective or formal opportunity of expressing its opinion thereon.

Therefore this League, in the name of the nation, protests against the Land Purchase Bill becoming law, declines in advance to accept its validity, informs all whom it may concern that it will at the earliest practicable moment be repudiated, and warns those proposing to profit by it that interests acquired under its provisions will not only be treated as null and void, but will be made the subject of retrospective penal legislation as crimes against the State.

This protest was rather favourably received by the public and a considerable portion of the press. Even the Conservative prints demurred to the expediency of hurrying forward

such important financial proposals without obtaining the direct sanction of the electorate; and an amendment was moved in committee to postpone any action under the Bill for twelve months, in order that public opinion might have time to express itself. This was of course declined by Ministers, who knew well enough what the public thought of the whole proceeding, had no idea of delaying the operation of the Bill a day longer than was necessary, and were confident of remaining in office long enough to carry out its provisions to a very comfortable extent.

Committee was got through on the second Tuesday in December, and the Bill was put down for third reading on the Thursday following. On Wednesday evening, meetings to protest against the measure were summoned by the Phalanx at the Albert Hall, at Olympia, and at the Crystal Palace, which were attended by an aggregate of 120,000 persons. More than two thousand gatherings with the same object took place in various parts of the kingdom the same evening, at which the protesters numbered more than three-quarters of a million.

On Thursday reports were circulated that the further stages of the Bill would be postponed till the spring session; but these proved to have no foundation.

The third reading was made the subject of a protest f the fairly full episcopal benches, and all the Romanist At the division, which took place about midnight, abo five peers voted against the Government; but the re present stuck to their traditions of brigandage, and ters home triumphant.

During Friday universal excitement prevail tions against the Government were eagerly appeal to the country by means of "test mined on. Towards evening strange ru tion. Ministers were absent from thei and the Government whips met t addressed to them with blank neg

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the scene of a Cabinet meeting which lasted till 3 a.m., and an army of reporters picketed the portals.

In the morning the country was electrified by the news that the Royal assent had been refused to the Land Purchase Bill, and that Ministers had tendered their resignations.

CHAPTER X.

How this almost unprecedented* *contretemps* was permitted to come about was never quite clearly understood. Each of the society papers, of course, gave most exact details of what had occurred, but as no two of these explanations agreed together the public was comparatively little instructed from this quarter. According to one authority, the noble lord at the head of the Government, to whom it fell to maintain relations between the Administration and the Crown, had misunderstood the views of the latter when proposing to introduce the rejected Bill. Another statement was that his somewhat extreme ideas of ...nal government had led him to take a little too much for ...d in connection with the Royal assent to any measures ... to bring forward. Later reports suggested that con... the part of the Sovereign at an early stage of pro... become suddenly and unexpectedly modified ...lose; but opinion varied as to whether this ... (if a fact) was owing to purely private and ...ions, or to a more accurate recognition of the ...o the public disapproval of it, or to the ... of such a procedure unsupported by ...he extremely unsatisfactory nature of

...ised by William III. in 1693 (against the

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the arrangements by which Ministers had been maintained in office. In fact, all these and other hypotheses were advanced and discussed without anything reliable transpiring as to the actual facts of the case. But the prevailing impression was that the Sovereign had somewhat late in the day declined to follow Ministers upon a policy of adventure, and that this decision had failed to come to the knowledge of the Premier through his habitual and characteristic attitude of arrogant isolation.

The position of matters now became rather involved. The Leader of the Opposition was of course sent for, and in view of the fact that his opponents were in a large majority in both Houses, he naturally declined to accept office except on the mandate of a fresh election ; while he pointed out at the same time that it was the business of the Government, rather than of the Opposition, to appeal to the electors.

The Ministry, discredited by a piece of almost unexampled bungling, were reluctant to risk a hostile verdict from the country at a time when their inaction in reference to the Coal Syndicate was bringing upon them a hurricane of reproach and denunciation from every industry in the kingdom outside the pit-mouths. Eventually they proposed a coalition with the Liberal leaders on the basis of a re-arrangement of the Cabinet.

The more timid of the Opposition favoured this course. But the Phalanx saw that matters were ripening fast, and vigorously opposed any compromise. The renegade Liberals had, with two exceptions, been all called upon to resign by test votes of more than two-thirds of their constituents, and at least two score of Conservatives had openly expressed their profound regret that the advice of the Phalanx had not been taken with regard to the Coal Syndicate.

Finally, it was understood that the ministerial resignations had been withdrawn, that the Premier (who was apparently personally responsible for the existing imbroglio) had made up his mind to dissolve, and that the writs for the new House

would be made returnable for the last week in the following January. Parliament sat up to within a week of Christmas-day to wind up formal business, and was then dismissed.

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In the meantime the effects of the constant rise of the price in coal were beginning to be disastrous. Businesses of many kinds were at a standstill. Traffic of all kinds fell off in consequence of the enormous cost of fuel; and even the supplies of foreign coal brought in by the Syndicate scarcely sufficed to make up for the diminution of output arising from the unprecedented wages earned by the miners. These had become completely demoralised by a wage-rate already five times as great as their highest average earnings. Chronic drunkenness became the outlet for the financial plethora, and by the New Year of 1904 there was scarcely a colliery in which the men could be persuaded to work more than one or two days a week.

Every day fresh works and factories went on half-time or stopped altogether for want of coal. Nearly three million workmen were already only partially employed or out of work. The distress caused by the stoppage of wages, the exceptionally severe weather, and the prohibitive cost of coal, reached a point positively appalling. The straits to which people were reduced by the scarcity of fuel were extraordinary. The thefts of wood in unprotected places, of hoardings, palings, shop-shutters, roofs of sheds, &c., were so universal and incessant that all attempts to stop or punish the depredations were hopeless. In cottages, lodging-houses, and even in the better class of dwellings, doors, flooring, skirting-boards and staircases were torn up and used for fuel; and lamentable was the sight that met many a landlord's gaze when his tenants flitted at some subsequent quarter's end. Disease increased apace, while children and old people sank rapidly under the combined effects of cold and starvation. Scarcely a day passed without frozen wretches being carted away out of the high-roads, where they had fallen from sheer weakness and had been unable to rise

again. The death-rate for the twenty largest towns rose to 30, 50, and eventually 85 per thousand, the usual average of these being 17; and the workhouses failed to accommodate a third of those seeking shelter and relief.

Long before matters had reached this stage, the association of the miners with the cause of the daily increasing misery, which was now spreading amongst all the other operative classes with scarcely an exception, had not only aroused the wildest indignation amongst the various Trade-Unions, but had led to violent attacks on their leaders. Curses against the selfishness of the miners, who were represented as rioting over their share of the plunder of their brother workers, were mingled with bitter reproaches against the officials who had scouted the prophecies of the Collectivists, refused to co-operate with the Phalanx in its anti-Syndicate policy, and by their connivance with the coal-owners enabled the latter to achieve a success in robbing the public only equalled by the misery that accompanied it.

For the first time in the history of the working classes, the true bearing of the profit system became intelligible to them. They now began to see, what they had never seen before, that the utmost success in merely extorting high wages or short hours from their employers might be the concomitant of almost inconceivable misery to themselves as well as the wretches beneath them in the social scale. They saw an industrial undertaking in the shape of the Coal Syndicate carried on under politico-economical conditions of perfectly ideal purity, an undertaking conceived in most exact accordance with the commercial "spirit of the age," an undertaking in which their own order had joined without hesitation as being quite consistent with their own interests, which their co-operation had alone rendered possible; and the results were what we have described.

The fact that the whole of the disasters and sufferings of that terrible winter could and must have been avoided, had the policy of the Phalanx been adopted, came home to the prole-

tariat with a force of insistence that probably no other train of circumstances could have secured. Such a state of things was seen to be impossible under a system which would make the State the sole owner and vendor of coal, and of all other necessaries of life and essentials of industry. This appealed to the workers with an urgency wholly new, and led to a revolution in the policy of the great trade organisations as complete as it had been long delayed.

The obstructive and bigoted Individualists who had so long misled and misgoverned the Unions, hampered their proper action, and betrayed their obvious interests, were angrily called upon to resign. Avowed Collectivists were appointed to office in all the great Unions, without exception, by sweeping majorities. The programme of the Phalanx was adopted as the New Charter, and the State Industrialist party received an accession which represented nine million voters.

From this moment the property interest in Great Britain might be considered to be at an end, as the electoral strength of the proletariat rendered the existence of any other class a negligible quantity. The producers at this juncture, by the simple fact of coming to a practically unanimous decision on a question of policy, made that policy inevitable; and the only remarkable thing was that, having been possessed of the same irresistible power for nearly twenty years,* their stupidity should hitherto have prevented them making any use of it.

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The New Year was signalised by the collapse of the Coal Syndicate. Even the miners were beginning to feel remorse at the almost infinite loss and suffering which their partnership in plunder had brought upon the rest of their fellow artisans, to say nothing of the general public and of the most pitiable victims of all—the utterly destitute dregs of the population,

* Since the Reform Act of 1885.

against whom even the workhouses were now shut from sheer inability to receive them.*

The various Miners' Associations of the United Kingdom met in Congress at Glasgow in New Year week, 1904; and after some bickerings between the delegates and the officials (survivors of the old Individualist gang), it was decided to call upon the Syndicate to reduce the price of coal to the average winter prices of the previous five years, wages to fall at the same ratio. The latter proviso was based on the circumstance that the supply of foreign coal had entirely ceased, owing to a general strike amongst the collieries abroad; so that the miners were assured that their sacrifice of wages would not be accompanied by continued profit to the masters derived from foreign imports.

The Syndicate was at first inclined to resist dictation. But public opinion was so violently excited against the monopoly —even to the extent of indicating personal danger to its promoters and leaders—that the required concession was reluctantly agreed to. The combination dissolved a week later, after having, during its career, divided twenty millions of extra profit† amongst its members, brought innumerable industries to bankruptcy and ruin, and caused directly or indirectly the deaths of forty-seven thousand people—with incurable disease, broken constitutions and enfeebled health to survivors beyond calculation.

With the Coal Syndicate of 1903-4 ended a singularly explicit illustration of the free working of the Individualist régime. From the point of view of political economy, and of the mercantile morality of the age, it was (while it lasted) a genuine, thorough, and almost ideal commercial success, a triumph of pure "business" without spot, flaw, or blemish. It

* Experience had shown that the maximum dole of outdoor relief was no equivalent for the shelter (as well as food and clothing) provided in the workhouses, and that it only delayed, without preventing, starvation.

† Representing an average extra profit per ton of 9s. on 45,000,000 tons sold while the Syndicate was in operation—the annual output being 210,000,000 tons. In 1891 the output was 185,479,126 tons; in 1892, 181,786,871 tons.

was an achievement which, to those who profited by it, brought admiration, envy, and almost worship. It covered them with glory in the eyes of less successful plunderers, and was hailed as the model upon which future experiments of the same kind were to be conducted.

Unfortunately, however, for the brigand class, the Syndicate happened to be the rope which Individualism provided wherewith to hang itself; and it was interesting historically as being the last piece of organised plunder which the capitalist interest in this country ever had the opportunity of carrying out.

* * *

The annual Conference of the National Liberal Federation, usually held in the autumn, had this year been again postponed, and was now summoned for the end of the first week in January. The position of matters in the constituencies was unprecedented. The registers of the Phalanx muster-roll were so completely and so accurately kept that in a large majority of all the constituencies in the kingdom the results of the forthcoming elections could under given conditions be foretold with a near approach to certainty. From these it appeared that from the position of a very small minority of the voters, merely able in some instances to hold the balance between the historical parties, the Phalanx had advanced to that of dominating the electorate. This result was of course due to the long-delayed conversion of the Trade-Unions; although the previous adherence of the enormous bulk of the harassed lower middle class had raised the Collectivist vote to at least an equality with those of the Conservatives and Liberals, independently of the proletariat accession.

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When the delegates to the Conference re-assembled, the collapse of the Coal Syndicate left them free to proceed at once to the consideration of the only point of interest in contemporary politics, viz., the State Industrialist programme. The Phalanx,

which had always kept its official organisation rigorously independent of either of the great political parties, sent a deputation to the first meeting and laid its plan of campaign before the delegates. It was intimated that in a certain number of constituencies (which were named) the League was able to carry its own nominees against any opposition. In the others it would support such Liberal candidates as were prepared to accept its next sessional programme. If that were declined, each seat would be attacked by a Phalanxist. The programme for immediate legislation was to consist of the following :

1. The Agriculture Bill.
2. Graduated Taxation and Death Duties.
3. Control of the Coal and Iron Mines.
4. Protection of national heirlooms, monuments, and art-treasures.*
5. Abolition of the Lords' veto.†

(The last only if called for by friction arising with the Upper House.)

In the Phalanx constituencies proper, so to speak, only candidates in sympathy with, and pledged to, the complete policy of State Industrialism would be supported ; and Opposition members already sitting for them were invited to decide at once what course they would adopt. As the five proposals above referred to were already before the Conference in the shape of the printed drafts of Bills, the Phalanx deputation left the delegates to discuss the situation amongst themselves.

From the beginning it was evident that the acceptance of the Collectivist programme was a foregone conclusion. The timid and reactionary element in the Liberal party had been very largely eliminated the previous year, and the delegates were nearly unanimous in recognising the signs of the times. The

* This was introduced in view of a threatened realisation of such objects in the possession of capitalist irreconcilables and others, and their sale or dispersal in other countries.

† This provided that after a third refusal of the Lords to accept a Bill coming to them from the Lower House the measure should be submitted to the Sovereign for assent without further reference to the hereditary chamber.

Phalanx alliance was voted by an overwhelming majority, and the Parliamentary Committee of the Federation was deputed to arrange details of the forthcoming election with the Council of the League.

No space need be accorded here to the many interesting features of the General Election of 1904. Much of the excitement that would otherwise have attended the most momentous electoral contest in our history was discounted by the previous certainty that the result could only be in one direction. Nevertheless a profound impression was produced upon the public mind when the Phalanx itself was found to have secured considerably more than a majority of the whole House, the composition of the new Parliament being as follows :

THE PHALANX	386
LIBERALS	104
INDEPENDENTS	10
CONSERVATIVES	170
	670

The Collectivists proper therefore exceeded by 102 all the other sections put together. As the Liberals were pledged to support the Phalanx sessional programme, the result as a whole was the most decisive and significant since that of the election following the old Reform Bill of 1832.

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The Ministry resigned office two days after the returns of the election came in, and thereby terminated finally the connection of the Conservative party with the government of the empire.

CHAPTER XI.

THE retiring Ministry pointed out to the Sovereign the change in the position of the Liberal party brought about by recent events, and recommended the representatives of the majority to be consulted in the formation of a Cabinet. It was characteristic of the almost phenomenal good sense by which Royalty has been distinguished during the Victorian era, that the suggestion was acted upon without hesitation. The leaders of the Phalanx were summoned, and in response to the invitation the president and two of the secretaries went down to Osborne.

The situation was not without its critical elements. The State Industrialist programme and the legislation proposed by the Phalanx involved, if they did not avowedly aim at, the practical extinction of the very bases upon which the Upper House rested; and it was improbable that the Peers would accept the Collectivist policy in any of its more trenchant aspects, to say nothing of the financial measures already formulated. A hopeless deadlock was the least disastrous result to be looked for, if the new departure were to be opposed by the Crown as well as the Lords; and the Phalanx was not at all minded to have its prestige impaired by the troubles likely to accompany a prolonged constitutional crisis provoked by its own action in office. If the reformers were not to be able to govern the country on the new lines, it would be worse than useless for them to accept any official responsibility whatever. Conditions that involved the impossibility of their succeeding as Ministers, were conditions that dictated their remaining in Opposition till the pressure behind them became irresistible.

These considerations were laid before the Sovereign with the utmost frankness. Nothing was left undone to make it clear that the political aspects of the Estates of the Realm only concerned the policy of State Industrialism in so far as they might interfere with its successful operation. The Upper House had never been an object of attack by the Collectivists

except in its purely obstructive capacity. Apart from its power to delay or prevent legislation, it was altogether outside the scope of any contemplated action on the part of the Phalanx. It was considered to be entirely a question for the Peers themselves whether, under the proposed new conditions of the social organism, the House of Lords should be maintained in any other form than as a Final Court of Appeal in Imperial Judicature.

Replying to what might have been an embarrassingly direct question as to the views of the Phalanx on the future position of the First Estate itself, the deputation stated that nothing in their principles called for the slightest interference with the existing status of the Crown ; that Royalty would and must remain a political and social element of the greatest practical service in the constitution of the empire ; that the Phalanx as a whole included the most steadfast adherents of the Monarchy ; and that the very completeness of the Collectivist programme was the greatest safeguard that the wit of man could devise against further constitutional changes.

The general programme of the State Industrialists was found, as might have been expected, to be minutely known to the Sovereign, and a thorough acquaintance with the arguments supporting it was indicated. Details of the proposed bills for the session were asked for, and after these had been given at some length the president expressed a hope that satisfactory reasons had been given for their reluctance to accept office, unless they were warranted in expecting the assistance necessary to carry out the measures so emphatically approved by the electorate.

Asked to specify definitely, for the consideration of the Sovereign, the maximum demands that the Phalanx might consider it essential to make, the deputation submitted a previously prepared statement. This set forth that the frightful distress prevalent through the country rendered expedient the immediate passing of the Agriculture Bill and its necessary complement the Taxation Bill ; and that in the event of any

hesitation in passing these measures through the Upper House, the Lords' Veto Bill would be made urgent. This measure would provide for the Royal Prerogative being so far extended as to permit of Assent being given to any bill thrice rejected by the Lords, and would enable peers to sit for parliamentary constituencies. To pass this the deputation suggested a list of 510 names of proposed new peers (whose status subsequent to the passing of the bill would be that of life peers), with the qualification that it was possible this list might be reduced by fifty on occasion. This latter remark was based on expectations of considerable secessions from the irreconcilable aristocratic party if the Sovereign should decide to follow the constitutional course of supporting the representative House when its mandate was so unmistakable.

The deputation finally took leave to intimate that the system of party nominations to paid or unpaid offices connected solely with the Royal Household was one inconsistent with the entirely neutral and independent attitude of the Phalanx as a national party; and that in the event of their assuming office they would not be prepared to make recommendations for the Royal approval in reference to posts unconnected with the actual public service.

At this stage the audience was graciously terminated, and the delegates were informed that the Royal pleasure would be signified at the earliest possible moment.

Two days of intense excitement followed. The Peers hurried up to town by every train, and groups of noble lords discussed the burning question of the hour at their various clubs, while the family solicitors of the great houses were allowed no respite from the deluge of hypothetical questions addressed to them as to the bearing of the proposed graduated taxation. The movements of members of the Royal Family (most of whom were summoned to Osborne at this juncture), and of the leading politicians of the old parties, were the excuse for hourly editions of the papers. Business was wholly at a standstill, and the telegraphists nearly broke down under the torrent of messages that occupied the wires the whole of the day and night.

On the morning of the third day the president of the Phalanx received the Royal command to wait upon the Sovereign at Osborne, and was desired to undertake the formation of a Cabinet. His recommendations were handed in and accepted on the spot. Parliament was summoned to meet the following week; and the Collectivist Revolution was formally (as it had already been practically) inaugurated.

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The enthusiasm aroused throughout the country by the action of the Crown was unparalleled. Processions of the Trades marched in every town and village singing the National Anthem; loyal addresses poured in from every branch in the kingdom; and at every public gathering the slightest reference to royalty was sufficient to elicit a hurricane of applause from the whole assembly.

The entry into power of the Phalanx, under conditions so unprecedented and significant, almost completely broke up the old party traditions. The Liberals who did not sympathise with the new movement ceased to be looked upon as members of any party of progress, and simply survived as Individualists. From this point of view they were of course not to be distinguished from Conservatives.

In the Lords the mere sanction by the Crown of the State Industrialist programme led to the formation of entirely new divisions. A larger section than might have been expected, consisting chiefly of the more plucky and manly of the younger peers (most of whom had gone through the usual ultra-democratic fever at college) avowed themselves ready to give the Collectivist system a fair trial now that it was inevitable. Others had recognised that the impending financial reform would affect them personally much less than they had at first carelessly supposed, owing to the fact that their gross receipts were out of all proportion to their nett personal incomes. A handful of impecunious peers found they would be better off under the graduated scale than the old one; and the House was as a

whole utterly opposed to any step which would involve (if persisted in) the threatened creation of new peers. It resulted, as the outcome of the situation of the hour, that when Parliament assembled Ministers had occasion to anticipate that a serious collision with the Upper House might be avoided.

As reference will be here and hereafter made to the rapidity with which the measures brought forward by the Phalanx were passed through Parliament and carried into execution—as contrasted with the interminable delay, incompleteness, bungling, and routine obstruction of former days—it may be pointed out by way of explanation that, first of all, legislation under the old régime was a deliberate sham. Neither political party had any interest in passing any measures at all; but in order to gull the public it was necessary to pretend to do something. The fewer the measures required to occupy the session, the less was the tax on the inventive faculties of the Government in office. Ministers were always secretly pleased at anything tending to prolong debate and delay procedure, and then complained with tongue in cheek of "obstruction." The only measures ever likely to be of service to the public were left to private members, and the system of balloting for private nights was expressly devised to prevent as far as possible their being passed into law. With the new state of things all this was altered. The Phalanx Ministry meant business and nothing but business, and parliamentary government could hardly recognise itself in such a changed atmosphere.

Again, bills used to be introduced which had been scarcely considered at all, much less perfected before introduction. Concessions to vested interests, and compromises with bigotry and prejudice, were part and parcel of a system which was based on no principle whatever except that of plunder, and recognised no policy except a hand-to-mouth and stick-to-office one. Formerly most bills were new when brought in, both as regards scope and details. These required close examination before they could be even understood, and blunders from haste were of constant occurrence.

All the Phalanx bills on the contrary had been drafted ten years ago at least. They had been at the disposal of members and the public for consideration and amendment all that time, and had only taken their present shape after criticism, both friendly and hostile, had practically exhausted itself. Not only this, but all the details of their subsequent practical operation had long ago been threshed out, and the machinery necessary for their complete carrying into effect carefully elaborated.

The new Government met the House with the four bills laid before the Federation Conference in January. The Agriculture Bill was introduced without comment. The Taxes and Duties Amendment Bill was accompanied by a supplementary Bill which suggested that if (through the operation of the new scale of income-tax and duties on transfer by death) the owners of historical palaces and mansions were unable or unwilling to keep them up as heretofore, the Board of Works should be empowered to undertake the maintenance of them on behalf of the nation, with the proviso that full access to them by the public at all ordinary hours should be guaranteed.

The Heirlooms, &c. Bill involved a point of real urgency. The Government was quite prepared to find its accession to office result in an enormous transfer of personal property from Great Britain to foreign countries, through a real or assumed dread that the reign of mob violence and general anarchy was only a question of weeks or days. It was feared that the national art-treasures, objects of historical interest, antique furniture, plate, brasses, carvings, panels, tapestry, decorations, mementos and records of bygone times, all those things which illustrate the history and traditions of an ancient land and serve to link the present with the long-buried past, were liable to be at once removed from the places with which they associated, sold to American, colonial, or foreign curiosity hunters, and lost to this country for ever. None of these objects represented income to their owners; their possession was a privilege of

riches, but permitted of no interest on the wealth invested in them. It was recognised as intolerable that the nation should suffer an irreparable loss—a loss for which no money could compensate—to occur under its very eyes, at the moment of coming into its own true inheritance again.

The Bill accordingly provided that no example of artistic handicraft, and no picture, statue, or work of art of any kind, not already foreign property, should be conveyed out of the country without the permission of a special committee (to be called the Archæological Council of the Department of Science and Art); that no object of decorative, historical, or archæological interest should be removed from its existing place without the permission of the same Council; and that no tree over twenty years old should be cut down without the permission of a special committee of the Woods and Forests Office.

The Bill for controlling the Collieries and Mines was promised a few days later.

The Heirlooms Bill was at the request of Ministers passed through all its stages before the dinner hour. It made its appearance before the Lords about nine o'clock the same evening, the Upper House having been called together at this hour on purpose, and was received with distinct approval by all but a mere handful of the assembled peers. As a matter of fact, the Bill was one that appealed to the most creditable instincts of the most popular aristocracy the world has ever seen. There were scarcely a dozen men present against whom the Bill was likely to operate, and not even they were disposed to fight the battle of the *nouveau riche*, the vulgar millionaire, or purse-proud art patron who had bought Turners and Coxes as an investment, speculated on a rise in his Gibson or Thorvaldsen, and treated his Wedgwood pottery and carving by Grinling Gibbons as a security to nurse. Many of them had writhed at the sight of immemorial ancestral elms and cedars cleared away from the lawn of the rich trader who had bought some old country seat, of carved panels and oak wainscoting swept away to secure "every modern improvement," and of

mediæval silver and gold plate carried off from Christie and Manson's by Yankee pork, railway, and Standard Oil magnates. It is true that no aristocracy ever existed so utterly and invariably destitute of artistic taste as the British, and that no class had so completely ignored the claims of contemporary art upon its support; but at all events their old masters, armour, mediæval weapons, and monumental brasses did not represent speculations with an eye to business.

The second reading of the Bill was fixed for the following day. It was felt that the qualifying clauses of the measure were sufficient to deal with any legitimate exceptions to its operation, and no serious opposition was made at any of its stages. The Bill received the Royal assent just in time to prevent a furiously anti-Phalanx public-house owner in Liverpool from selling his collection of Rossettis to a Chicago hog-millionaire.

The Taxes and Duties Amendment Bill passed through the Commons practically without debate. The Opposition demurred to the first reading on the ground that the Government proposals constituted a Budget, and that it would be only decent to wait until the Lords could be attacked with the constitutional weapon of the Appropriation Bill. Ministers of course replied that the proposed delay was out of the question, and that in view of the other measures which were dependent on their financial proposals, the battle of taxation must be fought in the open and at once. An amendment was moved in committee to postpone the operation of the measure for twelve months, but negatived without a division; and the Government added a clause to continue the existing excise and custom-house arrangements till time permitted of assigning other duties to the staff concerned with these departments.

The reception of the Bill by the Lords displayed all the phases of opinion previously indicated; and it was for a time doubtful whether the transfer-duty clauses would not be rejected, even at the risk of a fatal collision with the Commons. The limitations to the acquisition of property by death

and succession would operate directly to break up the surviving fragments of the feudal system, as represented by the enormous landed possessions of the territorial peers; and would render nugatory all the statutes and customs associated with primogeniture. A law which would practically prevent any succession to property from benefiting the new owner to the extent of more than £100,000 would evidently extinguish the existing land system in a generation; and it was no particular consolation to the landlords to be told that there was not the remotest chance of the system lasting even ten years. A very large number of the peers, otherwise sane, were firmly of opinion that the greatness of the British Empire had been owing altogether to the fact of its being furnished with an aristocracy. They saw no loophole for criticism in the fact that a couple of thousand men of their class should own half the soil of the United Kingdom,* or that one hundred and seventy should have secured possession of a little over half Scotland. Nothing but what was admirable presented itself to them in the circumstance that in England alone they were able to exact £210,000,000† per annum from the inhabitants as a penalty for being born in it. They were satisfied that there was no title to a share in the government of the country so complete as that of being a great landlord's eldest son; and many of these good souls went to their graves full of the idea that they were people of intrinsic importance, that they served some useful purpose by existing, and that they furthered the national interests by attending exclusively to their own.

After the debate on the second reading had lasted two days, an amendment was carried, by a small majority, to the effect that it was expedient that the Income Tax provisions and the Transfer Duty clauses should be made the subject of separate Bills, and that the former proposals should alone be considered at present. This information reached the Commons as Mini-

* To be exact, 2,184 owned 38,875,522 acres (English Land Restoration League, Tract 6) out of a total (including foreshore) of 77,606,146.

† In 1892, £199,300,000 (Inland Revenue Report).

sters were taking a vote on account of supply. The Chancellor of the Exchequer immediately gave notice to introduce the Lords' Veto Bill the following day, and moved to suspend the orders so as to pass it through all its stages at one sitting.

The minority in the Lords had urged the folly of engaging in a perfectly useless (and therefore undignified) struggle with a Ministry which was known to have secured the acceptance of their sessional programme by the First Estate of the Realm. The peers received the news of the Chancellor's notice before their sitting was suspended, and the minority at once carried out a previous threat of moving to rescind next day the amendment carried only an hour before. Meetings of various sections of the peers were held the same evening, and a conference with Ministers was proposed. This was, however, abandoned in favour of a request to the Ministerial Whips to delay the transmission of the Veto Bill to the Upper House till after the next day's debate in the Lords was over.

In the meantime pressure was brought to bear from high quarters on the irreconcilable peers. This resulted in a wholesale abstention from the division lobbies on the following day, when the hostile amendment was rescinded by a large majority, and the second reading was carried.

From this time forward the proceedings in the Lords were as a rule merely formal. After the great financial Bill had received the Royal assent (which took place a week later), the bulk of the peers took not the slightest interest in the remaining legislation of the session ; and no clearer proof need be adduced than this of their utter indifference as an order to the welfare of the country at large, when their own class and personal interests were not in question.

The Taxation Act, as it was in future styled, took effect immediately on its passing. As already stated, a special clause made it an addition to (instead of a substitute for) existing sources of imperial revenue. This qualification was of course a mere matter of precaution and temporary convenience. The principle of the Act was conceded to be theoretically perfect ; but

the results of the graduated scales could not admit of precise calculation beforehand, and as regards the Income Tax clauses the rates might require revision after trial. The yield of the Transfer Duties would of course be largely dependent upon chance and accident, and formed part of the general scheme for vesting the national land and capital in the State rather than of any question of revenue. For the ordinary administration of the public service, the ordinary sources of revenue were therefore left undisturbed.

As nearly two months still remained before the close of the financial year, it was hoped that the nominal result of the new demands on the taxpayers would be known before the Budget was due, even if unavoidable delay should occur in actually collecting the new imposts.

The necessary tables to assist in assessing the graduated tax to all the possible totals of income having been long ago prepared, all that remained was to strengthen the staffs of the income-tax department, and send out the demand-notes on the new scale as quickly as possible. The tables had already been on sale, and it was not necessary for any taxpayer to wait for the official demand-note in order to know the amount of the claim which would be made upon him. The surveyors were of course instructed to make no claim in the cases where the tax already paid or payable under the old rate was equal to or greater than that chargeable under the new scale. In all other cases the amount of the old tax, if already paid, was allowed in calculating the new claim. Provision was made to meet the cases where the sums due under the Act were so large as to preclude immediate payment.

The penalties for evasion of either section of the Taxation Act were very severe. As the infliction of a mere fine would be farcical under the circumstances, under-statement of income and the withholding of information concerning any transfer of property under the Act were punished by imprisonment, to which in cases of corrupt assistance hard labour was added for all the parties to the transaction. The natural temptation to

remove property in England from the operation of the onerous duties in connection with the acquisition of real or personal property by succession, inheritance, or deed of gift, led to many attempts to defeat the law; but without success. The clause which made successive gifts from the same donor within three years to rank as a single one for dutiable purposes, the scale of duty therefore rising *pro rata*, was one of a most searching character; and to a large extent it rendered nugatory any efforts to lessen the burden on large totals by subdividing them. Concealment of facts by non-interested third parties was punishable as well as participation in the evasion, and a large reward was offered for any disclosure of attempted fraud.

The Act further contained a clause by which, in the event of any unentailed estate coming into the market, the State should have the option of acquiring it by guaranteeing the present holder an annuity equal to the average annual value of the property, as returned by the owner or owners for the previous five years for the purposes of income-tax assessment. This annuity was to be paid in such form as the Government for the time being might direct (a proviso which had reference to the "credit" clause of the Phalanx programme), and was payable during life or 25 years, whichever should turn out to be the longer period.

Amongst other results of the new legislation, it may be mentioned that the enforced registration of transactions involving any transfer of real or personal property aroused intense hostility on the part of the banking, bill-broking and speculating fraternity. In fact, warnings had to be conveyed to the more noisyof the malcontents to remember that the maintenance of the existing fabric of commercial credit, finance and Stock Exchange thimble-rig was not in the least a part of the policy of the Government; and that Ministers were quite prepared to hurry up their general programme a little, if forced to do so by inconvenient restlessness in capitalist circles. It is hardly necessary

to say that it was only the element of pure gambling and swindling in the "City" and the "House" to which the registration clauses of the Act presented any real difficulty or obstacle; and this section of the business world of the day had the best reasons for objecting to publicity in any form or degree.

At least two-thirds of the English territorial peers found themselves, as a consequence of the new tax, unable to keep up more than a fraction of the numberless mansions, country-seats, shooting boxes, and foreign villas upon which their income had hitherto been spent. In one typical case a bachelor duke stated publicly that his own personal expenditure rarely exceeded £15,000 per annum (including the keeping up of the yacht in which he spent at least half the year), while £80,000 of his income went to maintain members of his family, the army of women-servants, flunkeys, gardeners, and gamekeepers at his five palatial mansions in various parts of the country (which he scarcely ever visited), and his moors in Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Scotland. All these various establishments were therefore handed over to the Mansions Board, to be maintained, on the same footing as the National Parks and Museums, for the benefit and enjoyment of the public; while the noble owner expressed himself thankful to be left in peace to his lodgings in Pall Mall, his club, his yacht, and his fishing box in Norway.*

The maintenance of the many parks and palaces, whose care was now assumed by the Mansions Board, involved of course a mere fraction of the expense formerly entailed upon the actual owner. A sub-committee of practical horticulturists decided on what should be done with the kitchen-gardens, conservatories, &c., in each case, all operations not essential to the full enjoyment of these new show-places by the public being discontinued, and a vast retrenchment being effected in the gardening staff.

* The arrangements necessitated by the cessation of employment for the innumerable hangers-on of the great families referred to, and of other persons affected by the Phalanxist legislation, will be detailed in a succeeding chapter.

The organisation of the domestic work and caretaking was handed over to a Ladies' Committee, which was to select for these duties the widows and orphan daughters of professional men, military and naval officers, and members of the Civil Service; while those who conducted visitors through the grounds, and performed the rougher domestic duties, were invalided and pensioned soldiers, sailors, postmen and policemen. The ultimate use (as sanatoria for the sick, infirm and aged) to which all but a few of these country seats were put will be referred to later on. At present we need only say that the pleasure and advantage to the public arising from the free entry to so many parks, gardens and estates of unsurpassed beauty and interest from which they had been jealously excluded, was something difficult to overestimate.

It may be explained here that all charges, annuities, jointures, &c., secured upon estates and property for the benefit of others than the nominal owner, were deducted to find his nett income, and made the subject of individual assessment. It will therefore be readily understood that the necessary diminution of direct personal expenditure in the case of the bulk of immensely wealthy people was frequently almost nominal, and resolved itself as a rule into the cutting down of recklessly extravagant balls, dinners, soirées, and at-homes, at which hosts and guests had usually been bored to death, and the cessation of which was a perfect godsend to those most concerned.

*

The financial results of the Taxation Act may be summed up as follows:

The Stamp Duties (which had not of course permitted of any estimate as to their probable yield) were found at the close of the financial year, 1904-1905, to have brought in nearly £24,000,000; but this scarcely represented cash, as much of it resulted from receipts in death and succession duty, and the claims of the State had consequently to be liquidated by transfers of land and real property. In these cases, as in others, the

Act gave Somerset House power to estimate land and buildings at the owner's own valuation for income tax purposes, with priority of right to purchase or take over at that valuation. In this way some tardy restitution was automatically effected for the impudent cheating of which the Exchequer had for more than half a century* been made the victim.

The financial statement with which the Government met the House on Budget night showed a deficit of £2,000,000 on its predecessors' estimates, arising mainly from the disastrous results of the coal crisis on the small incomes which had hitherto borne nearly the whole burden of taxation. As a result of its own legislation, there were receipts in cash and securities of £120,000,000 (to which £10,000,000 were added later from the Stamp Duties), together with outstanding arrears amounting to nearly £185,000,000 more, besides about £12,000,000 (nominal value) of real estate accruing subsequently. The new and additional revenue would therefore reach a total of £315,000,000, irrespective of the ordinary Budget.

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We have dealt with the fiscal measures of the first Phalanx Cabinet at (we fear) wearisome length; but it has appeared expedient to show with what ease and simplicity the process of restitution of property in the United Kingdom was initiated. For years it had been prophesied that nothing short of civil war could bring about such a change; that the slightest interference with the existing ownership of wealth would bring the whole social fabric about the ears of its infatuated assailants; and that unlimited hardship and injustice would result even if the attempt were successful.

As a matter of fact, the change of system had no such consequence in the slightest degree. The pressure of the new imposts on the enormous majority of the people was so light as to be almost nominal, and nineteen-twentieths of the sum

* The Income-tax in its modern form was first imposed in 1842.

raised in taxation came from the pockets of people whose chief difficulty had been how to discover or invent effective methods of wasting their money. There was not the least fuss, disturbance, resistance, or evasion openly exhibited in connection with the great reform; and indeed the chief danger to the progress of Collectivism arose, as we shall presently see, from the complete success attending its inauguration.

CHAPTER XII.

We may now return to the measures put forward by the Ministry to cope with the industrial and social problems so urgently calling for solution. Amongst these the Agriculture Bill was the most prominent.

During nearly a century the class of unemployed, unskilled labourers, inevitably associated with the hordes of professional tramps or criminal loafers who were maintained either by the prostitution of their female companions, by theft, or by organised mendicancy, had been the despair of social reformers. For more than a generation the increasing disproportion between the number of workers and the amount of employment open to them had made the conventional retort to an able-bodied beggar, "Why don't you go to work?" quite pointless and inapplicable. Every one knew that thousands of steady, honest, and industrious fellows spent days and weeks vainly seeking work, and then perhaps only succeded in getting a few days' casual employment, to be followed by a further hopeless search and then the workhouse. If this were the case with men whose personal character was unimpeachable, what was to be expected by those whose associations were of the class either directly connected with, or bordering on, the criminal? There was certainly no general predisposition amongst em-

ployers to give the man with no character a preference over the man with a good one. Failing this, how was the shady or semi-criminal loafer to live?

It was evident that whatever legislative remedies might be devised to bring pressure on the unauthorised (as distinguished from the authorised) parasites of the community, *they would all be inoperative as long as the opportunity for earning an honest and adequate income was utterly lacking.* The first imperative preliminary to the trenchant schemes of social reform projected by the State Industrialists (apart from the economic changes leading to the same result) was to remove the plea that no work was to be had for the seeking; and the Agriculture Bill had this for one of its foremost objects.

The scheme of operations intended to follow on the passing of the Bill, and for which the reorganised Board of Agriculture was to be responsible, need only be very briefly described here. Through the previous publication of the draft of the measure its main proposals were well known. Like every other undertaking initiated by the Phalanx, it had been the subject of several years' exhaustive study, investigation, and criticism by experts. Information as to the nature and capacity of every part of the soil of the United Kingdom had been collected from the leading agricultural authorities, local land-agents, well-known horticulturists, and market gardeners. This had been tabulated and digested with the utmost completeness. Schemes in general and in detail had been long ago waiting in the pigeon-holes of the Phalanx head-office. Estimates of all necessary work, plant, machinery, and labour had been drawn up, and the maps, surveys, and working drawings were ready for the instant commencement of operations. It had years ago been decided what lands should be irrigated, drained, turned from arable to pasture, or vice-versâ; where new centres of supply and administration for great machined farms of several square miles each should be formed, or where the system of intensified "petite culture" should be put in operation; where canals and reservoirs for water should be

constructed ; where new tram lines and railways should be laid ; what amounts and kinds of fertilisers were required to produce the utmost the land was capable of yielding ; what places and districts required new seeding, fresh planting of fruit trees, or protection from wind by forestry ; and, in short, everything called for in a scheme which proposed to utilise almost unlimited resources to secure the maximum results indicated by chemical science as being possible in modern agriculture.

Clauses in the Bill provided for the utilisation of sewage throughout the whole kingdom. After twelve months from the passing of the Bill no sewage was to be permitted to be discharged into stream, lake, or sea. A choice was given according to which either the Rochdale or the London system was to be put into operation to secure the fertilising products. The Agriculture Board was empowered by the Bill to defray the cost of the necessary works where they did not exist, the Board appropriating the product in these cases. The operation of this clause was expected to involve a cost of £13,000,000.

It was estimated that it would take four years and a half to systematise the agriculture of the whole country at the proposed standard of efficiency. The capital outlay contemplated in the first year's programme proposed to be carried out reached a sum of £124,000,000. Of this sum the proportion of wages on the Phalanx scale was set down for £99,000,000. The working expenses of the area dealt with were expected to amount to £85,000,000, and the aggregate value of the crops to £88,000,000. This was on an assumed average of about £11 per acre (on 8,000,000 acres) of yield, but the plans provided for nearly 500,000 acres of orchard and market garden, from which the ultimate average yield would be at least £100 per acre.*

* Mushroom culture (an industry eventually reaching enormous dimensions on account of the proved nutritive value of this delicious esculent, and the ease with which it could be grown in the open air) gave results of from 25,000 to 28,000 lbs. to the acre at an average market value of 6d. per lb. (See "Mushrooms for the Million," by J. Wright, F.R.H.S.)

It may conveniently be mentioned here that an important part of the land scheme of the Phalanx consisted in the restoration to absolutely common land and wilderness of all the land not required for the highest kind of cultivation. So small a portion of the soil was likely to be required for the purpose of maintaining the present population, that it became the first duty of a civilised government (a term which could scarcely be applied to any predecessor of the Phalanx) to secure to the citizens, at every convenient spot, examples of purely natural landscape, and access to the widest possible tracts of unenclosed country. In every district and subdivision under the Board it was made a *sine quâ non* that every centre of population, great or small, must have in its immediate vicinity the largest expanse of common and forest land which could be conveniently arranged for. Private copses, plantations, park land and forests were to be appropriated for this purpose, as a matter of course, whenever near a centre of population ; and reafforesting operations were part of the general scheme. Rights of way were to pertain to all lands under the Board's control, and (except of course in case of market-gardens and the like) access was permitted to all parts of the public domains.

The most revolutionary proposal of the Bill was the system upon which wages were to be paid to all employés of the Board. It prohibited the employment of married women with young families, and of children under eighteen—the last being an obviously temporary provision in view of the education programme of the State Industrialist party. The scale of wages was fixed at the rate of twenty shillings a week for unmarried workmen and female employés, and thirty for married men whose wives were not State servants ; with an additional allowance of five shillings a week for every child under eighteen years of age. The children thus provided for were in every case compelled to attend the Board or other certified schools of their districts. No distinction was made between skilled and unskilled labour, and the working day was fixed at eight hours for five days a week and four on Saturday. Every State employé was accorded

free transit on the railways, and (by arrangement with the municipalities and public companies) on the various tram and bus lines; besides being free of the State medical staff established by another clause of the Bill. Necessary Sunday service entitled the employé to a free day and a half during the week.

Although these proposed differences in the rate of payment had been all along foreshadowed by the original programme of the Phalanx, and had of course been open to discussson during the years that the Agricultural Draft Bill had been before the public, there was even yet an undercurrent of obtuse misunderstanding of provisions which were of the very essence of the Collectivist creed. The Trade-Unions themselves had supported the Phalanx almost *en masse*. But now that its programme was being initiated, a considerable number of the less intelligent and more crassly selfish of the unmarried workers listened with a certain amount of sympathy to the Conservative Rump when it reviled the new scale as an insane fad, as a piece of impracticable sentimentalism, and as a mischievous interference with the conditions of the labour market. It was asked, "What on earth had an employer, State or otherwise, to do with his employé's domestic affairs? What difference did it make to a labourer's value whether he had half a dozen children or none? Why should his being married make his work worth fifty per cent. more than if he were a bachelor?"

The reply was, that his being in the employ of the State made all the difference. His children were embryo citizens, and he was paying out of his own pocket for the rearing of the future servants of the State. In the case of his wife, he was maintaining at his own expense a citizen who would otherwise directly or indirectly be thrown for support on the community at large, and who in that case—under the vile system of the age—would probably assist by her competition in reducing the wages

of her husband or his fellows.* The old argument, that such a scheme as was proposed would lead to an excess of marriages and to a reckless increase of families, was met, as it had been met long before, by the retort that it was impossible to have an excess of marriages as long as there were slightly over a million women in the kingdom who could by no means except polygamy get married at all,† while readiness to add to the family muster-roll had always been a characteristic, not of those in comfortable circumstances, but of those least able to support their children, or unable to support them in any way whatever. The antagonism to the new wage-scale in reality expressed nothing more than the convenience to a selfish bachelor of being able to spend on himself alone the same sum which his married colleague had to share with half-a-dozen others. This, however, was a mere drop in the ocean compared with the satisfaction entertained by the immense majority of those who had undertaken, or were saddled with, family responsibilities. A clause enabling a bachelor to claim wages on the married scale, if he could show that he had members of his family entirely dependent on him, provided against any injustice being done by the new system; and the nett result of opposition to it was absolutely nil.

The introduction of the Agricultural Bill was followed immediately by that of a measure intended to anticipate still further the final application of Collectivist principles to the industry of the nation. This was the Civil Service Supply Bill, which was pushed forward step by step with the main measure, and received the Royal assent the week following the presentation of the Budget. It may be here convenient to

* As for instance in the Yorkshire wool-manufacture, where the men's wages being an average of 24s. per week while the women were paid for the same work 16s. to 18s., it resulted that "competent male weavers were walking about doing nothing, while married women (leaving their children in the charge of other persons) went to work at the mills." "Later on, the daughter supersedes the mother by working for less wages" (Labour Commission, Nov. 12, 1891).

† Representing of course the difference between the male and female population of the period; an inequality which has curiously enough almost disappeared during two decades of a Collectivist régime.

describe the actual operation of both Acts rather than merely to define their objects, and we will therefore give a few particulars in this connection before resuming our account of the session of 1904.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Agriculture Act stipulated that no wages should be paid in money, but that all wage-earners should be placed in account with the State, and should be provided with a credit-warrant enabling them to supply themselves with everything they required at the Civil Service Supply Establishments, usually called the State Stores. This warrant was for the present made strictly non-transferable (pending its universal introduction) for reasons which will appear later on.

In every town within the sphere of operations of the Agriculture Board complete "universal provision" stores were opened by the Supply Board, based for the present on the lines of the original Civil Service Supply Association. The Board had power to take any premises off-hand that suited its purpose, compensation being given in Government annuities to the parties interested. Good-will was reckoned at three years' purchase (that being considered rather longer than the existing property system was likely to survive); and, whenever practicable, existing management was continued at the same salaries as the State wage rate. In London, one was opened near each principal railway terminus, and 150 others at various points in the districts where the bulk of the workmen were found to reside. It need hardly be said that the vast bulk of the unskilled labourers were drawn from London and the great seaports; and pending their gradual restoration to the country districts (by colonising them at various points along the railways running through the State farms) provision was thus made to meet their convenience while they remained part of the congested urban populations.

All the State Stores were connected by telephone with each other, and with the termini, so that purchasers could order whatever they required as they went to and from their work, and have it delivered without waste of time to themselves or their wives, or other members of their families. In very many cases the nucleus of the Store was a large public-house, which on transfer to the Board was made to serve the purpose of a coffee-palace as well; while the neighbouring property was drawn upon to provide accommodation for the various departments of the Store. In London, only a few of the State Stores contained anything beyond provisions and articles of daily use or consumption. It was evident that clothing, furniture, and the like would only require to be purchased at intervals, and could then be made the occasion of a journey to the Stores which supplied these requisites. No expense was involved in the arrangement, as the credit-card or book was all that had to be produced to secure free transit by train, bus, or tram to all the State servants. All purchases were delivered free when required.

Rents were paid by the Supply Board, and deducted from the credit due weekly to the employés. In cases where the property was unobjectionable in character and likely to be tenanted by State employés for some time to come, it was taken over and the owners compensated.

As regards the only thing not provided by the State Stores, namely public amusements, the arrangement was very simple. Managers of all respectable theatres, music-halls, concert-halls, circuses, exhibitions, &c., were called upon to pass State employés to the unreserved parts of the various buildings on production of the credit card (which was to be accepted as covering admission for *two* persons). By way of equivalent for this, they were exempted from payment of all rates and taxes.* Arrangements were made by which the box-office clerks were enabled to sell reserved seats in the usual way, by deducting

* The tram and bus companies had been compensated in the same way for the use of their accommodation.

the amount from the credit cards presented, and obtaining from the purchaser a receipt which was subsequently redeemed through the State Clearing House. This latter office was the channel through which the respective accounts of the Agriculture and Supply Boards were adjusted, as all the produce of the former Board was required to be utilised by the latter before the outside market was resorted to. The various articles of supply were credited to the Agriculture Board at the current wholesale prices, and were charged to State customers at an increase of five per cent. only; while the outside public was charged a profit of ten per cent.

By the operation of this system the Government secured the custom of its new employés as regards everything purchasable, except admission to places of amusement; and found a market, within the margin of the demand arising at the Stores, for everything that the State Farms could produce. By a short Act passed at the request of many other servants of the Crown, the wage-rate and credit system of the Agriculture Board were placed at the acceptance of every Government employé. An immense number availed themselves of the privilege, tempted by the provision for free transit,* free amusements, and the great reduction in the retail price of commodities at the State Stores.

The machinery of the "credit-wage" system was found to operate in many directions other than those of mere buying and selling. A clause in the Supply Bill gave any magistrate, before whom a State employé might be convicted of drunkenness, power to stamp the accused's credit-card with a mark which precluded his being able to purchase any intoxicants for a month, two months, and so on, at his discretion. Another clause enabled a wife to limit her husband's expenditure on drink to ten shillings a week by applying to a magistrate to

* This had previously been conceded as far as the State Railways were concerned, but of course not as regards tram and bus service.

stamp his credit-card accordingly. As no drink could be purchased by a credit-wage earner except at a State Store (unless he contrived a roundabout and laborious device of barter or exchange), these provisions placed so many difficulties in the way of getting drunk that innumerable sots, who stopped short of being absolute dipsomaniacs, found they could enjoy themselves with much less trouble by going to some place of amusement for nothing. The credit-card passed two wherever it gave admission at all, so that they could always thus secure a companion. It was true that the habitual soakers could and did abuse this, by usually arranging that their companion should reciprocate the attention by standing drinks for both. But even under these circumstances much less was drunk than during the corresponding time spent at a gin-shop; and as the privilege of admission could only be exercised once the same day (the date being stamped on passing the pay-box) a certain benefit resulted even under these unfavourable conditions.

On the other hand, the free access to a place of recreation at night started thousands of tipplers on the road to temperance. Their wives naturally brought considerable pressure to bear in favour of their own *prima facie* right to utilise the second admission. Where there were no children old enough to be entrusted with the care of the lesser ones during the parents' absence, a neighbour was usually very willing to do this service on condition of being allowed to share in the free admission on other occasions. This extension of the privilege, even when it was utilised by non-State employés, did nothing but good. It brought many gleams of sunshine into homes where anything in the shape of theatre-going was a hopeless dream. It made the service of the State popular to an unprecedented degree; and did more to sweeten toil, promote happiness, and soften home asperities than could previously have been supposed possible. It was the old cry of "Panem et circenses" finding itself answered in the twentieth century. Two thousand years after the Roman populace shouted for "Bread and the games!" as embodying all their requirements, the

same panacea was being tried again with much more than the old success.

The selection of prominent public houses as the nuclei of the State Stores was obviously calculated to operate in favour of temperance, by diminishing the number of liquor shops in private hands. Every possible facility and attraction in connection with the coffee-palace department was introduced which was likely to be of assistance in enabling the new features of these resorts to neutralise the old ones. All the establishments were of course open to the public as well as to State employés, with a view to secure the largest market for the various State products. As the prices were so little above cost, the effect was very much the same as if so many more cash co-operative stores had been added to the considerable number already existing. The result in the case of the small retailers was to intensify the pressure of competition amongst them, and led to hundreds of them giving up a harassing struggle and applying for work under the Agriculture Board. They thus became producers instead of remaining useless distributors, and so added to the actual wealth of the community.

The date at which the Agriculture Board was enabled to begin its operations was of course too late to permit of a very marked increase in production following its efforts during the year 1904, except in the very important direction of market gardening. The cereals were nearly all sown, and there was only a limited opportunity of taking steps to improve the yield from pasture, hay-lands, and root crops. But the complete theoretical preparations which had been made in advance by the Phalanx sub-committees of land-agents, farmers, and agricultural chemists (with the assistance of the Chambers of Agriculture), prevented the slightest unnecessary waste of time in applying fertilisers, extending any existing facilities for irrigation, and adding to the sheep and cattle on the grazing lands which had been insufficiently stocked. These measures, limited

as they were, led to an increase of nearly 30 per cent. over the average of the district dealt with; and this without reference to the "petite culture," which permitted of more direct operations, and the returns from which were very considerable.

In the meantime the preparations made for the autumn campaign on the lands taken up by the Board were colossal. Double shifts of men worked during the summer months on all the great sections of the counties under the Board. These were occupied in laying drainage and irrigation pipes, sinking wells, making canals, digging reservoirs, laying tram and light railway lines forming a systematic network over the whole of the farming lines, and fertilising poor or exhausted soils. The operations of the Board included the building of model villages for the workers on the associated system, the carrying out of sewage works, the demolition of condemned cottages and hovels, the erection of storeplaces, dryhouses, silos, and cattle buildings, together with miles of sheep-sheds on the great northern moors and mountain sides; and, in short, all the vast works required for scientific farming on a national scale.

The economic result of all this may be readily imagined. A great part of these operations called for unskilled labour only, or could be satisfactorily carried on with the slightest possible training; and as a matter of course, not only was all the hitherto unemployed labour absorbed, but accessions to the ranks came from entirely different sources as fast as arrangements could be made to receive them. Thousands of the slaves behind the desk and the counter threw up the situations which compelled them to work under conditions of discomfort, exhaustion, foul air, and semi-starvation; and chose the fresh air, the open fields, and a certain income free from worry and anxiety.

The pauperism rate sank to one-fifteenth of what it had been the previous summer, and the residue represented old people and invalids who had no relations to claim or support them. The workhouses were practically empty. Before the close of the session a short Act empowered the Local Government Board

to call on the County Councils to prepare, without delay, four-fifths of the workhouse accommodation for transformation into technical schools (at the expense of the Treasury), in view of special arrangements to be made by the Education Department during the autumn and winter.

The absorption into the ranks of regular wage-earners of the whole class which had for a century been the despair of philanthropists had several notable effects. Wages rose in almost every trade and business. The death-rate for the spring and summer of 1904 fell to ten below the lowest previous record of any year since the statistics had been collected. The police magistrates were over and over again presented with a blank charge-sheet and a pair of white gloves. Although business was brisker than it had been at any time during the new century, the usual results following in former days on reviving prosperity were now conspicuously absent. There was no inflation, no rushing of new companies nor starting of new manufactures, no rampant speculation, and no over-production. Every one knew that the days of the old system were now numbered, that its existence was only a matter of months, and that all that remained was to await with confidence and courage the coming of the inevitable end.

The great reform had been successfully inaugurated. All necessary steps had been calculated, foreseen, and provided for with the utmost completeness. Everything had worked smoothly, quietly and safely. Conspicuous poverty had almost entirely disappeared, while no one seemed really the worse for the change. Yet that which had been achieved required nothing but the most ordinary common sense, coupled with the technical science always available, and the practical experience which could have been supplied at any time by two or three managers of large English estates.

CHAPTER XIV.

We have referred to a clause in the Supply Act by which the Supply Board was empowered to purchase any business or properties which were necessary or desirable for the carrying out of its operations; and of which advantage was taken to secure the most commanding hotel and public-house sites available. The opportunity thus apparently given to deal with a large proportion of the drink traffic itself, led to a considerable amount of pressure being put upon Ministers by various sections of their supporters. The more enthusiastic Collectivists pressed for the immediate abolition of the private trade in intoxicants and its direct carrying on by the local authorities or the State; while the teetotalers vigorously demanded its entire suppression. In reply to the former, the Government represented the inconvenience of dealing with any section of the distributive arrangements of the country apart from the imminent settlement of the whole question. The champions of the Alliance were assured that while Ministers entertained no doubt whatever that the complete inauguration of Collectivism would result in the prompt extinction of general intemperance, they could no more pretend to interfere with people's private liberty in the matter of drinking than they could in eating, clothing, recreation, or religious belief. Even if so preposterous a piece of dictation were morally justifiable, there would remain the standing objection to legislative interference with intemperance, viz., that if the incentives to excess (as distinguished from drinking facilities) were allowed to remain, the vice would be simply driven under ground without being got rid of. So long as there remained an army of incorrigible loafers and semi-criminals without honest occupation, so long as the public-house was the only place of resort for thousands of people in which to wile away their leisure, and so long as squalor and discomfort reigned in innumerable homes, drink would always be resorted to even if it had to be obtained illicitly. The only

effect of coercive measures would be to set going a host of secret drinking dens, bogus clubs, "groceries," and all the machinery found so effective in defeating unpopular statutes. It was true that by largely increasing the detective police force much of this evasion of the law might perhaps be punished (if it could not be prevented); but to use such a machinery in such a cause, and against so large a section of the community, would be equally odious whether it succeeded or failed.

As a matter of fact, the programme of the United Kingdom Alliance (the chief temperance organisation of the old régime) presented many features which will scarcely be credited by the twentieth century student. For one thing, this now almost forgotten body actually aimed, not only at diminishing drunkenness, but at forcibly suppressing the use of intoxicants altogether. It proposed to effect this outrageous interference with personal liberty in purely private matters by enabling the majority of persons in a given district to prevent the minority from selling or buying any alcoholic beverage of any kind; and it was not ashamed to represent this as a purely democratic measure, based on the theory of government by majorities—a definition which would of course have equally justified the proceedings of the Sanhedrim, the Inquisition, or the "Committee of Public Safety." More than this, it not only claimed the right to suppress at a moment's notice all the businesses connected with the sale of intoxicants without a farthing of compensation, but it had the effrontery to argue, from the system of annual licensing, that the tradesmen had no vested interest in their trade beyond a year's tenure. It is obvious that this argument would have applied equally to the salaries and pay of the judges, of the army and navy, and of every civil servant throughout the empire—all of whom were technically dependent year by year upon the annual supply-votes in Parliament.*

* The mischief done to a most admirable cause by the fanatical programme of the Alliance, and by the disreputable sophistries used in support of it, was incalculable—so much so that a widespread suspicion prevailed towards

The measures ultimately intended to be proposed by ministers in connection with the drink traffic were to be preceded by certain steps, more or less imminent, in other directions. One of them was the foundation of a Board of Recreation, which was instructed forthwith to quadruple (at least) the number of places of public amusement throughout the country; the additions being understood to be mainly of the theatre class, but intended rather for what are called "variety entertainments" than for the drama proper. The reason of this was evident. In the case of the lowest grades of culture and intelligence, viz., the classes for whose benefit these arrangements were mainly devised, any demand upon the thinking faculties was fatal to their interest. The most elementary form of the drama, any piece of music lasting more than a few minutes, in fact any appeal to the reasoning and reflective powers, bored to death those of whom we are speaking. But they were quite capable of enjoying active movement, dancing, conjuring, acrobatic feats, comic and sentimental songs (especially in costume or character), special displays of skill with instruments, apparatus and the like, and a liberal sprinkling of band music—all mingled together and following in rapid succession. This constituted the so-called "variety" or music-hall programme, which comprised almost everything that was not music, and was rarely given in a hall; but which had the immense advantage of being the easiest, cheapest, and safest form of entertainment to organise and produce, which could be presented to an audience.

Any phase of the drama dealt with on suitable lines must always involve great expense in scenery and appointments, laborious rehearsing, large and experienced staffs of performers, mechanicians, and assistants. The work of months of prepara-

the end of the century that the wires of the Alliance were secretly pulled by the Licensed Victuallers' Association, and that the latter body subscribed largely to the funds of the former in order to profit by the disgust of the public with the temperance propaganda. Unfounded as this suspicion probably was, it affords an illustration of the impolicy (to put it on the lowest ground) of making a bad institution popular by attacking it unfairly.

tion might fail to interest the public, and the failure was of course complete, inasmuch as the whole evening's entertainment went by the board. In a variety entertainment, on the contrary, nothing was required but to engage an adequate number of "artistes" for a limited time each. There was very little in the way of preparation, rehearsing, new scenery, or staff required; while nothing could wreck the performance as a whole, because if one performer during the evening missed fire, the others would be satisfactory, and the individual failure counted for nothing.

In the extension of provision for public amusement, the great mining districts were the first to be catered for in this respect, as they were by far the worst off of all for any places of amusement other than those of the vilest class. The powers of the Board as temporarily constituted of course over-rode altogether those of the local authorities in this connection. The action of the latter was still wholly tinctured by class consideration for vested interests; and new licences had continued to be habitually refused merely because existing music-hall proprietors claimed to be protected against competition.

Twenty years before the date of which we are speaking, such steps as are described above would have been been virulently denounced by a certain section of the so-called "religious world," whose antagonism to public amusements was based on the ancient Puritan theory that any form of enjoyment was hellish and damnable. They would have received in consequence the reluctant opposition of those who were compelled by the mercenary hypocrisy of sectarian organisation to support the bigots in order not to be injured in their business. Till somewhat late in the nineteenth century, the elder generation of Nonconformists had succeeded so thoroughly in forbidding the practice of in-door and out-door games, and in repressing the love of music, poetry and the drama amongst their connection, that the curious restriction of human interests to guzzling (for the men) and dress (for the women), which was called "spirituality" or "consistency," had remained

fairly general. But the lapse of time had altered very much of this. The younger generation of Dissenters had had time to see through the bigotry, prejudice, hypocrisy, and spiritual pride of their "consistent" progenitors. They had thrown off the gloomy yoke to so large an extent that the fanatical hatred of theatre, concert-hall, ball-room or cricket-ground, which had once been the pride of the British "Methody," was now rarely met with. The sons of those who were accustomed to invoke the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah on the patient crowd waiting at the gallery doors, were disposed to think the playgoers might possibly be spending their time better before the foot-lights than in the gutter or a gin-palace. The spiteful taboo on football and cricket, which was almost (and in Wales, quite) universal amongst the Dissenters of the last decades of the century, had practically ceased to be heard of. Although its disappearance was lamented by the survivors of the old school as a proof of the advance of atheism in an infidel age, it is probable that benefit to both mind and body resulted from the gradual decay of the more debasing aspect of provincial Puritanism.

The purchase, erection, and alterations of property to be used for the purposes of the Recreation Board required of course more time for their carrying out than the organisation of the Stores, and it was expected that the winter would be approaching before the whole of the preliminary batch of operations were in a sufficiently forward state to permit of actual utilisation. The Board did what was possible in the interval by multiplying beyond number the public bands and free concerts which were already a noteworthy feature of the local municipal arrangements.

In the meantime, the absorption by the Agriculture Board of all the unemployed labour of the country had left the Government, for the first time, free to take action in a direction of the utmost importance to the comfort and safety of the community.

For at least two centuries, although the Vagabond Acts really constituted a weapon by which the class of habitual loafers, roughs, and criminals could have been readily dealt with, they had been allowed to remain a dead letter; unless indeed some iniquitous injustice was required to be perpetrated against the deserving poor and unfortunate.* Thousands of men were well known to the police as neither having, nor desiring to have, any honest means of subsistence; and while half of these lived on the shame of their female associates, the bulk of the remainder were perfectly open and notorious criminals. Yet under the amazing notions of public policy obtaining under the old régime, it was considered no one's business—least of all that of the police—to interfere in the slightest degree with these gentry except in a few special cases. The best-known burglar, pickpocket, or swell mobsman walked the streets with the calm of assured safety unless he happened to be "wanted" for some particular offence, or unless the attentions of a usually friendly police force were directed to him by the inducement of a considerable "reward on conviction."

As regards the professional roughs and cornermen, the bullies, hustlers, and tormentors of the passer-by in low urban and suburban neighbourhoods, "society" never saw them, never heard, felt, or smelt them, and consequently ignored their existence. If wealth had one advantage greater than any other, it lay in its power of raising an impenetrable barrier against all the vulgar annoyances which were suitable enough for the "lower orders" to be exposed to. The risks, the dangers, the foul language, brutal insults, attacks, and outrages to which every dweller in Whitechapel, the New Cut, Seven Dials, and Wapping was exposed, were kept miles away from the cognizance of the legislator in Belgravia and Mayfair. The principle of the first and third class railway compartment extended through

* As for instance when in August, 1891, a certain Horncastle magistrate sent one Cheseldine to jail for seven days for sleeping in a barn, whither the "vagrant" had resorted (with the owner's consent) in order to enable his destitute mother (aged ninety) to earn a few pence by letting his own bed to strangers during the race week.

every institution of society. Those who could alone remove the abominable and utterly needless adjuncts of the life of the very poor were not only able to escape those adjuncts themselves but to treat them as if they did not exist. If they were recognised at all, they were treated as something which their victims rather enjoyed than otherwise, and therefore as excuses for a type of social organism not *per se* adapted to meet criticism from an ethical standpoint.

In a Collectivist society the existence of an army of incorrigible tramps, loafers, roughs and desperate criminals would be a nuisance and a menace at least as great as under the old régime, and a Government which for the first time represented the slaves of the community, rather than the slave-drivers, would have been feeble indeed had it accorded to the pests of society the sympathetic license of its predecessors. To deal with this enormous evil was accordingly the immediate task of the ministry.

One of the first measures introduced by Ministers after the Agriculture Act had come into full operation was the Vagrant Acts Amendment Bill. This measure provided that not only should the inability to prove means of subsistence be a penal offence, but that the penalties should be severely cumulative, rising eventually to penal servitude for seven years for successive offences. Women were exempted from the operation of the Bill, and it was provided that its penalties should be extensively advertised for two months before action should be taken under its provisions. Productive industrial occupations in gaols and convict prisons were made compulsory, and refusal to work was to be punished by reduced dietary or flogging at the discretion of the governors and medical officers.

When these provisions were announced, the sect of sentimentalists (most of whom knew as much of the ruffianly class as they did of the Aztecs, and were credited by scoffers with recommending from West-end drawing-rooms the reform of

wife-kickers and armed burglars by means of the contemplation of bouquets of wild flowers, the playing of the Moonlight Sonata, and poetic appeals to "the higher nature") raised their usual wail of protest against such unkind, inconsiderate, and degrading treatment of their pets. But this simply excited the derision of the working-men members in the Commons. The latter knew exactly from a lifetime of personal experience how much (or how little) the class in question was capable of being "degraded" (being in fact infinitely lower than the brutes already); and what an exquisite contempt they cherished for any possible deterrent except the dreaded "cat" and the still more dreaded hard work. So great was the sympathy of the proletariat with the Ministry in regard to this particular Bill, that more speeches in support of it were delivered from the labour section of the House than in connection with any other debate of the session. Perhaps no detail of the ministerial programme so forcibly brought home to the down-trodden victims of Individualism the fact that, for the first time in our history, the weak were to be protected by the ruling powers instead of crushed.

The Bill passed in due course, and the official placards informed all whom it might concern through the length and breadth of the land that any male person over sixteen years of age observed or suspected to be without regular and assured lawful means of subsistence, and not following any occupation, would be arrested, and on summary conviction sentenced to hard labour for not less than two months, to be increased at the discretion of the magistrate to a maximum of one year if previous crimes of violence had been proved against the prisoner. Notice was given that the Act would be stringently enforced on and after the 1st of July following. Every placard gave full information as to where State employment could be obtained by those willing to work, and mentioned the rate of wages and other privileges of State service.

The scare which followed on this abrupt departure from the old routine of regarding the criminal classes as a sort of preserve out of which an occasional specimen could be fished now and then (just to save appearances at Scotland Yard, and prevent these protégés of the police getting too saucy and careless), was notable in the extreme. Amongst other results it had the inconvenient effect of quadrupling the ordinary average of robberies with violence, pocket-picking, and area-sneaking during the month of May. But this unexpected outbreak of depredation was in reality a part of the successful working of the Act, and represented nothing more than the necessity on the part of the "conveyers" for the raising of passage money to New York, and for the possession of enough ready cash to evade the "pauper emigrant" rules of Castle Garden.

From the beginning of June a steady stream of broken-nosed and light-fingered gentry poured into the Atlantic liners, under the eyes of the detectives appointed to watch this compulsory exodus. It was computed that at least six thousand birds of prey had winged their flight to the United States alone before the end of the month, to be probably robbed of their last farthing by the police over there on their arrival. About fifteen hundred more of the better-to do, the capitalists of the profession, preferred the Australian colonies, and a comparatively small number crossed the Channel. As a general result it was estimated that out of an estimated criminal population of 22,000 (excluding 6,000 women and 4,500 persons under sixteen years of age)* 12,000 paid or worked their way to Canada and the States, 4,000 to other countries, and a few to the Continent; leaving about 5,500 to receive the subsequent attention of the authorities.

The more intelligent of the predatory fraternity had long ago perceived that with the inauguration of the Phalanx pro-

* It will be observed that these numbers showed very little variation on those of fifteen years before, when the figures were 31,718, of whom 4,582 were under sixteen years of age, while 6,383 were women. This was exclusive of 13,125 persons in local prisons, 5,130 in convict prisons, and 4,293 in reformatories (Report for 1888-9).

gramme (and more especially with the abolition of currency) their occupation would be gone, and their further residence in this country a mere waste of time. The new Act therefore merely expedited arrangements which had been previously determined on, and caused them little practical inconvenience. But their less astute or more impecunious brethren were much put about; and, as we have seen, they had to exert themselves considerably to secure the means of continuing their professional avocation in another and (in a business sense) a better world. Many of them failed in the attempt, or were (unfortunately for this country) detected and convicted; and a certain residuum prepared themselves for the worst.

Nothing of all this troubled the rough and loafer class. A certain cheerful optimism (begotten of chronic drunkenness and a life of more or less dignified leisure at other people's expense) characterised the gentlemen of the pavement at this juncture, and a remarkably inexact view of their future prospects pervaded this particular rank of society. No one had ever troubled them before, and their imaginative powers were unequal to the task of conceiving the contingency of any one troubling them now. Their simple wants had hitherto been met in a way congenial to their tastes, and the idea of modifying this state of things in the direction of forcing them to do something for a living, would have struck them, if at all, as something too monstrous to be credible. Apart from the leniency, not to say tacit sympathy, with which their playful brutalities had usually been treated by the magistrates, the notorious inutility of any appeal to the police by a carping public, when the highways were from time to time rendered impassable, had bred a feeling of security and content with the established order of things too profound to be readily disturbed.

The ostentatious patronage by the magistracy of the wild beasts of society was of course a survival of the time when every justice of the peace was appointed on political grounds, and as a reward of partisan assiduity or unscrupulousness.

Part of the electoral machinery of those days consisted in the utilisation of the rough element in each constituency to disturb and break up opponents' meetings, yell for the candidate who paid them, form his bodyguard in the public streets, support his claims with lungs, hoof, and fist as directed, and in general to bully and harass the voters on the other side whenever opportunity offered. It was evident that a partisan magistracy was not in the least likely to be severe on a class whose services were in urgent demand every two or three years. As the enormous majority of the justices and county magnates at quarter sessions were Conservatives, to whom the dragooning of the people was as the breath of their nostrils, it followed that the genuine rough of the period, like the born flunkey, was almost invariably a fervent supporter of "the Constitution"—and his political creed was necessarily strengthened by the indissoluble alliance of his patrons with the beer interest. Although the opportunities for this patronage of the dregs of the populace had been practically extinguished by the successive reforms in electoral procedure, the prejudice in their favour remained as vigorous as ever amongst the innumerable justices of the peace who were too old to unlearn the traditions of their youth and middle age. This, and the habitual encouragement by the propertied class of any element amongst the lower orders which could harass and intimidate them, was probably sufficient to account for a confidence of attitude on the part of the slum idlers and bullies otherwise rather unintelligible.

In order to prevent any serious interference with the ordinary duties of the police and of the courts, the numbers of the constables had been nearly trebled during June, by engaging for temporary service all the discharged or pensioned officers available, and by adding new men to the force who could replace on quiet or routine beats those required for the intended raid on the slums.

Meanwhile the Home Office had called upon the various town and county councils to make (at the expense of the

Treasury) any addition to the strength of the police and detective forces under their control which might appear necessary, and to prepare the now empty workhouses for a considerable temporary accession of unwilling guests. All the infantry regiments at home stations were put under orders to form guard parties, and the Portland and Dartmoor prisons were made ready for a large extra demand on their accommodation.

CHAPTER XV.

On the night of the first of July, eleven thousand men of different infantry regiments, with nearly two thousand officers, were quietly sent to the various appointed railway stations, and placed at the disposal of the chiefs of the police. The plan of operations had been elaborately detailed beforehand, although profound secrecy had been maintained as to the steps to be taken; and at half-past ten every public-house and gin-palace known to be the resort of the loafers and roughs was blockaded, the outer doors fastened by a simple contrivance and the inmates arrested and handcuffed. Every street and court in the slums was picketed, and the homing birds were caught as they made for their nests.

The whole night and a part of the next morning were spent in a rough-and-ready examination of the prisoners by the magistrates and the leading police detectives at the various places of capture—about as unsavoury a task as could well be imagined. Nearly a third of those arrested were able to give such an account of themselves as justified their release, and the rest of the cases were then more systematically gone into in the Courts. The weather happened to be intensely hot, and it was found convenient to march the prisoners in batches to the various parks to spend the time till they were wanted, supplying them with rations and water under guard of the troops.

They slept on the ground, as indeed a good many of them were in the habit of doing regularly on their own account during the warm season; and a good deal of inconvenience at the houses of detention was thereby avoided.

With certain exceptions the prisoners found to be incorrigible vagrants and loafers were divided into two classes. All those who had previously been convicted of brutal assaults on women and children were sentenced to twelve months' penal servitude at the Portland quarries and other places where productive work was carried on. The rest were given the option of the same sentence or of entering the army for three years. This alternative had been devised in order to see if the regular life, enforced cleanliness and sobriety, and thorough discipline of a recruit's career would be a more successful treatment of these "bad bargains" than detention at the convict prisons; and it was accepted by almost all those to whom it was offered.

The same steps were taken simultaneously in all the large towns, and in connection with the urban and county workhouses, whose casual wards entrapped a large number of incorrigible tramps and cadgers. The total number of persons to be dealt with after every reasonable excuse had been exhausted for releasing prisoners on a promise of industry (which was only accepted after the men had been formally taken on at the State works in various parts of the country) was about forty-two thousand. Of these nearly thirty-seven thousand accepted military service, and the resources of the War Office were somewhat severely taxed to provide for the safe custody of these involuntary recruits. The most promising were attached to regiments on foreign service and kept apart from the rest of the troops in batches of five hundred or thereabouts till discipline and drill warranted their being drafted piecemeal amongst the regulars. Fifteen or sixteen of our smaller island possessions in the Pacific were utilised for the rest, and the buildings necessary for their accommodation were put up by the men themselves under instruction by the Engineer officers, the garrison meanwhile being kept on board

ship. For this part of the proceedings thirty-two of the largest passenger steamers available were chartered by Government, partially armed, and despatched to their destination under convoy of cruisers in commission.

To provide for the convicts proper, a considerable measure of shortening sentences in both the home prisons and the convict establishments (wherever good behaviour justified it) was put in operation in order to secure accommodation for the new-comers. Several of the country workhouses were utilised until the new prisons on Bardsey and Tiree (which had been some years in construction) were ready for occupation. At Portland and Dartmoor steps were taken to keep the new-comers entirely separate from the old stagers already undergoing lengthened periods of penal servitude. It was intended to shorten the year of durance in all cases where there were reasons for expecting that the men would embrace the alternative of steady work outside.

The special raid on the dangerous classes which we have described by no means exhausted the steps taken under the new Vagrant Act. Arrests were made daily both in town and country whenever suspects came in sight of the now greatly increased detective force, and constant visits were paid by night to the common lodging-houses and places of bad repute. Wherever absence of means of subsistence was proved, the usual alternative was offered, and resulted in the majority of cases of military service being preferred to penal servitude. Ruffians already convicted of brutal assaults on women and children were, as we have said, allowed no option, but were sent to the quarries as fast as arrangements could be made for their reception.

In the meantime there remained over five thousand adult criminals in the kingdom who were unable or unwilling to follow their more adventurous brethren out of the realm. Of these more than three thousand were arrested before the end of 1904, and unless "wanted" for known offences, were treated very much as the loafer class had been. In the bulk of cases,

when found to be determined not to work, they were drafted off to the Pacific stations, chiefly on account of the convenience of guarding them in the convict islands, and of the fact that the climate of the latitudes selected tended to simplify the questions of warmth, of clothing, and of shelter during the winter months. The residuum must either have taken to work or gone abroad, as it does not appear that the police could hear much of their presence or movements from this time forward. Altogether the new Vagrant Act, as administered by the first Government that ever "meant business" in this direction, resulted in ridding the country of at least 20,000 well-known criminals and bad characters, and of 40,000 incorrigible roughs and loafers who were probably more dangerous and offensive to the community than the actual criminals.

The expense of this achievement was of course considerable, the ordinary cost of maintaining our prisons (about £550,000 per annum*) being rather more than quadrupled. But it is probable that a couple of millions were never more cheerfully spent by any community for any object than in the present instance; and it seemed at least as satisfactory an investment as a pair of ironclads at the same money which either became obsolete before they were launched, or were sent by their sister ships to the bottom in the course of autumn evolutions. The effects of the measure were deep and widespread; but we need not at this stage anticipate matters by further detailing them.

Simultaneously with the Vagrant Laws Amendment Act a new and sweeping addition was made to the old Reformatory Acts. It was evident that whatever might be the need of dealing with the adult members of the dangerous and criminal classes, an infinitely greater importance attached to the children

* Gross cost £766,200
less returns by prison work ... £223,400
£542,800
(Report for 1888-9).

who were born of this order, and who were growing up to the number of hundreds of thousands amidst surroundings, moral and physical, too appalling for description.

The horrors presented by the worst parts of our large towns at this epoch cannot be presented in any credible form to readers of the present generation, and we fear that no study of the literature of the subject, accurate and voluminous as it was, can convey an adequate idea of the then state of things to the inquirer of to-day. Suffice it to say that the hapless little wretches of whom we speak lived in an atmosphere of vice, profanity, drink, filth, stench, obscenity, violence, and crime almost beyond belief. Semi-starvation and semi-nakedness represented their habitual condition. When they were fed at all, it was with the worst and most unwholesome food; and drink was forced upon them almost in the cradle. Honesty, sobriety, truthfulness, chastity, even the elements of common decency, were things unknown and undreamed of; nor could they in most cases be made intelligible to them. Their frames were stunted and emaciated from lack of food and pure air, enfeebled by poisonous drink and precocious vice, and very frequently distorted and deformed by the hideously brutal treatment they received from their parents. Thousands of them escaped the action of the Education Acts altogether, as it was impossible to track or get hold of them in the human warrens where they swarmed. When dragged to school they were the terror and despair of the teachers and of the more decent class of pupils. Nothing of the child was commonly visible in these dreadful products of modern civilisation. Their faces were aged and debased almost out of human semblance before their first decade was passed, and their voices unlike anything to be heard elsewhere from beings of our own race.

The arrangements that were now imminent with regard to the maintenance of the female proportion of the community, and the wholesale expatriation of so many of the fathers of these children, not only justified but compelled a course more revolutionary than any yet adopted. It was felt that the rights

of parents in the case of this hapless section of the community could only be protected at the expense of utter and irremediable ruin to the children. The new Reformatory Act was in essence an assumption of parental control and parental duty by the State. It provided that any child not known to be under the care of reputable parents or relations could be brought before a magistrate, and at his discretion (which was very limited) could be sent for a term of years not exceeding fifteen to one of the National Training Schools to be established for the purpose. An appeal lay to three magistrates, and special weight was ordered to attach to the opinion and recommendation of the clergy of the district in the consideration of appeals. Access to the child was to be allowed, under proper restrictions, to the parents; and it was distinctly intended to provide for the latter being employed, when practicable, near the school where the child be educated. In every case without exception the schools were established in the country or at the seaside, under the healthiest possible conditions. Trades were part of the curriculum for boys, and regular military drill entered largely into their physical training. A military cadet uniform was one of the rewards for good conduct, with stripes and decorations for exceptional merit. Enrolment in the uniform corps, which drilled separately to the others, was soon found to be the greatest incentive to improvement that could be devised, while relegation back to the undress ranks was a thing to be escaped at all hazards. The country workhouses were utilised for schools whenever suitable, and all fresh premises were erected at the seaside, where training for the merchant and naval services was carried on concurrently with education. As far as possible everything that could savour of stigma in connection with the Training Schools was avoided. No distinctive garb was forced on the children, and the girls' dresses were permitted to be of various colours and fashions as they might select. Choral music was made a great feature, both on account of its adaptability to large masses, as well as in view of its refining influence; and the lads were encour-

aged to take up the instruments associated with military band performances.

Without going too much into the ultimate work of the Reformatory Act, we may say briefly that within six months of its coming into operation the child denizens of the slums, the waifs and strays of the gutter, the whole army of little starved, dirty, ragged and shoeless vagabonds that used to swarm like rabbits in the fouler districts of our large towns were utterly swept out of sight. Three quarters of a million of the nation's little ones were for the first time in their hideously wretched lives eating their fill of wholesome food, sleeping in comfort and cleanliness, breathing pure air, making acquaintance with such strange things as trees, flowers, wild birds, the heather on the moor, and the sands of the seashore; and were beginning to look as if they might, before it was too late, go back upon the days of their lost childhood, and be young in heart as well as in years.

As regards the parents of these children, it may be pointed out that a considerable portion of the little ones were practically orphans, through the death, desertion, or indifference of one or both parents. Cases were rare in which either father or mother raised any objection to the removal of the children from under their control; the blunting of the natural affections being an unfortunately general result of the life of reckless and brutal vice common to the outcast classes. In the case of mothers whose career was obviously that of prostitution or crime, no latitude in the administration of the Act was permissible; and habitual drunkenness was necessarily held to operate quite as conclusively. In many cases the husbands of such wives were themselves the first to ask for the interference of the law, knowing as they did that their children's lives were not safe for a moment at home during their own absence at work or while seeking for it.

With those numerous members of the very poorest class whose almost impossible industry at their miserable callings was only

equalled by the sacrifices they constantly made for their offspring, the case was widely different. In view of the probability that the lapse of a very short time—possibly a few months only—would see them all raised to comparative comfort, there was no disposition to interpret the new law against them, unless they themselves desired their children to benefit by the great advantages held out to them. Very many did so, and to all these free railway passes were granted to the locality at which the children were stationed, so that they might be visited at pleasure. In this way, results both to health and to culture which were impossible at the urban board-schools were secured without difficulty.

CHAPTER XVI.

In one or two directions we have been led as a matter of convenience to carry our account of legislative action and its results somewhat beyond the date with which we are supposed to be dealing, viz., the parliamentary session of 1904. Certain other events of the spring of that year now claim our attention.

It will be recollected that Ministers had announced measures dealing with the coal trade and the sale of intoxicants. The former turned out to be of a strictly provisional character, and were intended chiefly to tide over the interval which might elapse before the system of State Industrialism could be applied in its entirety.

At the moment of coming into power, the leaders of the Phalanx had made an arrangement with the representatives of the Miners' Associations by which the latter bound themselves to accept a certain uniform rate of wages for three years, or until the collieries should be taken over by the State. This rate was the maximum earned in any district before the recent rise caused by the action of the Coal Syndicate. Armed with

this treaty, the Ministry gave the owners and lessees of collieries the option of letting or sub-letting them to the State without exception, or of agreeing to charge, for all coal raised, uniform and continuous rates based on the average of the twelve months preceding the late disturbance. It was intimated that, failing acceptance of one or other of these alternatives, the State would make arrangements to take immediate possession of the colliery property in the country, leaving the question of compensation to be dealt with at its leisure. Jealousy of each other, and dislike of the Government, amongst the various owners prevented a general acceptance of the first proposal, and in default of agreement the second was adopted. It was to legalise this agreement that a measure was now brought in by which the wages of colliers and the price of coal were fixed definitely for a contingent period of three years; but the real occasion for its introduction was to make breaches of contract under the agreement matter for a prompt Crown prosecution instead of a squabble between masters and men.

The Sale of Liquors Bill was introduced avowedly as an experiment. It was intimated by the Cabinet that a part of their future policy, if supported by the electorate, would be to give a wholly new and severely stringent interpretation to the term "public nuisance." They stated that no part of their duty appeared to them more plain than that of securing to the public absolute freedom from uncalled-for annoyance, molestation, interference, or discomfort at the hands of individual members of the community. The right of the free and independent Briton to yell, howl, hustle and fight, at all hours of the day or night, to use the vilest language and the most disgusting gestures, to inflict his stench, filth, and obscenity, his drunken ferocity or maudlin fawning, his bestialities and his blasphemies upon any one he chose, in doors or out of doors, was no longer to be sanctioned by the State as the most sacred of human privileges. The provisions of the Bill were announced to be the first steps in attacking this venerable superstition.

All the above actions, when committed in public, were included by the Bill under the term "public nuisance," and were made punishable by imprisonment without the option of a fine. Any degree of intoxication in public, and the fact of a person being disgusting, dirty and offensive in person or in clothing in public, constituted an offence under the Bill. As an enormous preponderance of the offences arose out of drunkenness, the holders of licences for the sale of intoxicants were made part of the machinery for enforcing its provisions. Not only were they forbidden to supply with drink any person distinctly the worse for liquor already, but they were not to harbour any customer coming within the comprehensive term "public nuisance," and were called upon on pain of forfeiting their licences to give him in charge if found on their premises. A second conviction for drunkenness was punishable by hard labour, and a third by confinement in a dipsomaniac asylum.* The extra police force engaged in the raid on the slums was to be provisionally retained to enforce the clause of the new Drink Act.

It is pretty certain that this measure would to a large extent have failed to secure the object in view had it not been for the various other measures carried out by the Ministry. But when the dregs of the community were either expatriated or planted in country districts away from their habitual haunts, and when moderate healthy work with access to decent recreation were made the compulsory lot of hundreds of thousands more, the backbone of the old filthy rowdyism was broken, and the minor vulgarities and clownings of the larrikin class could be promptly and effectually checked. As a matter of fact, the moment it was distinctly made known that the vast bulk of what had formerly been considered "jolly larks" by 'Arry and his friends were now to be followed by a prompt sentence of imprisonment without the facile alternative of "five shillings," they ceased at once. They had rarely at any time been more than a devotion

* Those dependent for support on the convicted persons were provided for by the arrangements described a few pages later on.

to what represented the "correct thing" in a certain stratum of society. When that distinction ceased, they came to an end with it. A little more difficulty was experienced in persuading the great unwashed that a man was no longer to be allowed the privilege of clearing a certain radius around him by the filth of his person or the stench of his clothing. But plentiful advertising of the demands of the new Act in public-houses and other resorts of the class, together with the prestige of sundry convictions, soon brought about a noticeable concession to common decency in these respects. This tended in a measure to bring about a general approximation to the cleanliness of the professional tramp who had been obliged to go through the formula of a daily bath to secure his bed and breakfast in the casual ward.

Two other Acts completed the sessional legislation as regards British citizens. The first may be looked upon as the opening of the direct reform of real property, which had been only indirectly initiated by the Taxation Act. It contained two sections. The first provided for fixity of tenure at the option of the tenant—in other words, that no occupier after the passing of the Act need leave his holding unless he chose, all leases and agreements to the contrary notwithstanding. The second prohibited any raising of rent under any circumstances, and made arrears of rent recoverable only as a debt. No measure of the Government did more to preserve public tranquillity (so far as that was likely to be disturbed) than the above; and the reason was so obvious as to scarcely call for mention. People who, while satisfied that the new Collectivist policy would benefit the nation in the long run and as a whole, trembled for themselves individually, now found their worst apprehensions removed. They could reconcile themselves to diminished income and possible hardship at a moment of transition, but had dreaded above all things the possibility of being turned out of their homes in the process. All these now

breathed again, and thenceforward stuck to their guns manfully.

But the Rent Act would of course have only aggravated distress in one direction while relieving it in another had it not been supplemented by a measure which, in order to save appearances, was called the Temporary State-Credit Act, but which was nothing more than an outdoor-relief extension Act under another and less objectionable name.

Nothing was more certain than that any transition whatever from an Individualist to a Collectivist régime, even if it were protracted and gradual to a perfectly needless extent, would result in the prompt extinction of many methods of earning or possessing an income. Most of the spurious businesses which depended on the existing state of things were already beginning to disappear with the initiation of a fundamental change therein. The middlemen of every class were rapidly finding their occupation gone. Auctioneers, estate agents, architects, valuers, conveyancers, and surveyors had now scarcely any business ; not because people were disinclined to sell, but because nobody would buy. Stock and share brokers who were dependent upon speculative clients found themselves obliged to dismiss their clerks, and in many cases to shut up their offices. Even genuine transactions in securities were practically at a standstill, and the Stock Exchange was almost deserted. Commercial travellers were discharged in hundreds every week, or found it impossible to secure the orders or make the sales upon which their commission depended. Lawyers were doing nothing, as no one would go to law under existing conditions. Civil causes almost disappeared from the lists of the Courts, and barristers were briefless almost to a man. Many people of independent means whose incomes depended on rents found themselves unable to collect them ; in some instances because the businesses of their tenants had fallen away to nothing, in others because their property had been left vacant by the operation of the Vagrant Act and the ale of Liquors Act. Hordes of flunkeys, coachmen, stable-

men, and other hangers-on of great families were out of place, and had not yet been furnished with suitable State employment. All this of course had been foreseen by the Government, and was of itself a more than sufficient reason for the stress that had been laid upon the passing of the Taxation Act, for without it the Temporary Credit Act could not have been put in operation.

The object of the latter measure was to enable persons seriously distressed or embarrassed in means to tide over the interval till the new régime was in working order; and it provided a new and separate machinery, of a rough-and-ready character, for ascertaining the facts of individual cases and for meeting such exigencies as might arise. In every district Credit Boards were to be formed consisting of the resident medical men and clergy of all denominations, together with the local assessors of income-tax, as being the persons to whom personal and domestic details could be confided with the least hesitation or reluctance. These Boards had power to divide themselves into sub-committees of not fewer than seven, and were to meet semi-weekly to transact business. Their duties were partly compulsory and partly discretional, and consisted mainly in granting permanent or temporary credit on the State Stores under the following conditions.

Every woman over eighteen years of age not otherwise provided for was entitled to receive a credit of fourteen shillings per week, with an extra seven shillings per week for every child of her own or of her adoption living with her, the credit entitling her as usual to free transit by train, bus, or tram. Only half the credit was to be given on account of any illegitimate child born more than twelve months after the passing of the Act, unless it were affiliated, in which case half the credit was to be recovered from the father.*

* This last provision was, it is needless to say, criticised from various standpoints. It was denounced at once as illogical, inconsistent, a compromise

Families deprived of income from any cause connected with the recent legislation, and in which the head of the household was either incapacitated from accepting State service or could not at the moment be employed therein, together with all male persons over 60 years of age, were accorded a credit of fourteen shillings per week for the father or head of the family, ten shillings for the wife (if any), and seven shillings each for all other members of the family who could not be employed on State service. No allowance was to be made for domestic servants, except in cases of absolute necessity arising from disease, illness, or helplessness. Proceedings to recover debts already owing by the recipients of these allowances might be delayed for six months at the discretion of the Board, while the adult males credited with maintenance were liable to be called on at any time to perform for the State any kind of work without exception.

between two irreconcilable standards of ethics, an open encouragement to immorality, and an unwarrantable interference with private liberty. It was objected to on the one hand as making the State a censor of morals, and on the other as involving an official recognition of vice. But whatever attraction the doctrine of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children might have for a certain order of moralists, the Phalanx did not consider it any part of its duty to prolong the predominance of that principle in legislation. From a Collectivist point of view, the State value of a citizen as a producer was not at all influenced by the question of his legitimacy or otherwise, nor could disadvantages be fairly introduced into his physical or educational surroundings on that account; while to diminish or refuse the child-credit to the mother of an illegitimate child would be to injure the latter both directly and indirectly for no fault of its own.

On the other hand, it was objected with some force that one of the chief checks against immorality would be removed if provision were made by the State for the full maintenance of illegitimate children.

As a matter of fact, the problem under consideration was insoluble, and will remain so as long as the same offence against morals is visited by society on the woman with merciless severity, and on the man with tolerant indifference. Under these disadvantageous conditions the proposal of the Government of 1904 went as far as public opinion would support in making things uncomfortable and inconvenient for the male offender, while placing the mother (and through her the child) in a position as little prejudicial to the welfare of the latter as justice could permit. Nothing but an improved standard of public morals, and the upraising of the ethical tone of the whole community to the level of recognising the criminal aspect of private immorality, could be expected to permit of a logical policy in this connection; and for this, social reformers must be content to wait.

Unmarried women under eighteen without parents or guardians might be compelled to enter a State Training school at the discretion of the Boards, and such of these as had children were to be separated from the others till the age of eighteen was reached.

A very large number of the applicants for temporary credits consisted, as before mentioned, of the discharged flunkeys, lackeys, and other useless retainers, formerly employed for purposes of ostentation by the wealthier members of the aristocracy and plutocracy, and whose dismissal was one of the necessary results of the Taxation Act. This gave occasion to a good many worthy persons (whose knowledge of economics did not extend to the distinction between productive and non-productive occupations) to complain that the action of the Government had simply deprived a large number of people of the opportunity of earning a living in order that they should be paid by the public for doing nothing. But it was easy to point out that these people had been doing nothing all along, and that *the public had been paying them for doing it*—only the payment was disguised by being wrapped up in the tribute extorted from the community by their masters (also for doing nothing).

As a matter of fact, this criticism was part of the old ignorant fallacy that the rich "provided employment" by maintaining in idleness, or in useless occupations, a host of people who, under a sounder social organisation, must necessarily be maintained by their own share in the productive or distributive work of the community.* This ignorance of the obvious fact

* "That useful function, therefore, which some profound writers fancy they discover in the abundant expenditure of the idle rich, turns out to be a sheer illusion. Political economy furnishes no such palliation of unmitigated selfishness. No public benefit of any kind arises from the existence of an idle rich class. The wealth accumulated by their ancestors and others on their behalf, where it is employed as capital, no doubt helps to sustain industry; but what they consume in luxury and idleness is not capital, and helps to sustain nothing but their unprofitable lives."

"Whence is their purchasing power derived? It does not descend to them from the skies; nor is it obtained by submarine telegraph direct from California

that every non-producer must, in the last resort, be maintained by one or more producers (probably against their will, and certainly without their consent), was curiously widespread even down to the time of which we write. But it was almost excusable under a régime which made every addition to the ranks of the producers an element of competition, and consequently of injury, to those already engaged in production.

Under the new arrangements, not only were the discharged drones maintained at an expense to the workers considerably less than before, but they were turned into workers as fast as openings could be found for them. That these openings were always congenial to their tastes we do not pretend to assert. But as far as the community was concerned, a man became decidedly more useful as a citizen by fulfilling even the function of scare-crow in a wheatfield, than he had been while merely acting as clothes-horse for a livery in some front hall in Belgravia; while the energy and intelligence demanded from him in his new capacity would not be so much greater as to cause any conspicuous inconvenience.

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The estimated expense of the Credit Act naturally took away the breath of the old school of political economists, with whom the starvation of eleven-twelfths of the citizens, in order to make a few thousand of them rich, was a religion; but the whole sum fell far short of what had been annually wasted in liquor alone,* certainly with less advantage to the community.

The number of credit-holders under the new Act varied considerably, although the tendency was towards a gradual increase

of Australia; nor is its presence exhaustively accounted for by the presence of certain figures on the credit side of their accounts in their bankers' books" (Prof. J. E. Cairnes, "Political Economy," pp. 31 and 32).

They live, in the main, upon the portions of the national product which are called rent and interest, caused by the legal "guarantee to them of the fruits of the labour and abstinence of others, transmitted to them without any merit of exertion of their own" (J. S. Mill, "Political Economy," p. 129). "It is at once evident, that rent is the effect of a monopoly" (p. 255). "Monopoly, in all its forms, is the taxation of the industrious for the support of indolence, if not of plunder" (p. 477).

* In 1892, £140,866,262 (Dr. Dawson Burns in *Times*, Feb. 15, 1893).

as time went on; but it represented a steady credit-list of 1,100,000 women, and an average muster-roll per week of about 810,000 heads of families. The total cost of the whole list of credit-holders was found later on to be at the rate of about £124,000,000 per annum, or an average of £1 5s. 0d. per head per week (a single credit-holder of course often representing a family). This system, it will be recollected, carried with it free transit and free medical attendance, together with the compulsory use of the State Stores for all articles of merchandise.

It will be recollected that the financial resources of the first Collectivist Government which assumed office in Great Britain amounted (irrespective of the ordinary budget) to £327,000,000 for the year 1904-5. Although the available receipts fell somewhat short of £315,000,000 (owing to a portion of the stamp duties being taken out in real property), it will be evident that so far as its operations had yet extended the Phalanx Ministry had made no very disastrous inroad upon the national exchequer. The sewerage-works loans were estimated, as we said, to cost £13,000,000; the operations against the criminal and dangerous classes £2,000,000; their subsequent treatment £4,500,000; the Agriculture Board spent £124,000,000 on capital account and made a profit of £3,000,000 on working account (the expenses being £85,000,000 and the value of the crops and produce £88,000,000); the Reformatory Act cost £21,500,000, and the extra police expenses about £5,500,000; so that the first Phalanx balance sheet (as distinguished from the ordinary Imperial budget, with which we are not here concerned) stood somewhat as follows:

PAID.		RECEIVED.	
Sewerage loans ...	£13,000,000	Taxes and Duties ...	£315,000,000
Raid on slums... ...	2,000,000	Profit on Stores ...	8,000,000
Subsequent operations under Vagrant Act...	4,500,000	Crops	88,000,000
Reformatory Act ...	21,500,000		
Temporary Credits ...	124,000,000		
Extra Police	5,500,000		
Agriculture Board ...	209,000,000		
Sundries	3,700,000		
	£383,200,000		£411,000,000

leaving a balance of £27,800,000 unexpended at the conclusion of the first financial year.

With the passing of the Temporary Credit Act the legislative business of the spring session of 1904, as far as concerned the inhabitants of these islands, came to a close. The details of the Pauper Immigration Act, which put a complete stop to the reception in this country of destitute foreigners, and made any evasion or contravention of the prohibition the subject of severe penalties to all parties concerned, need not be recapitulated; while the important series of enactments intended to repair the scandalous wrongs of the native races of Hindostan must be omitted from the present recital.

CHAPTER XVII.

We have so far very hastily sketched the earlier legislative events of the most famous parliament in British history. Before going further it may be useful to indicate some of the more immediate and superficial results of the inauguration of the Collectivist régime.

For the first time since the fifteenth century, real poverty and destitution—the absolute want of the common necessaries of life—were extinguished throughout the United Kingdom.

So enormous was the amount of work (all tending either to immediate or future production) undertaken by the various new Boards or by the municipalities under the recent legislation, that the labour of the producing classes was at a premium. Wherever the State credit-wage was in advance of the prevailing rate of wages, the private rate had to be raised to the same level as the State-rate, or labour could not be obtained. The working of the differential rate, when it was not adopted by private firms or companies, led of course to the State employés being as a rule family men, while the bachelors

remained with private employers ; a state of things which was found to be of advantage to the Government in confining its staff for the time to the more responsible members of the community.

Sweating had become almost wholly impracticable. This ideal and perfect type of the working of scientific political economy had always been dependent upon the frightful competition for the barest necessaries of a merely animal existence amongst hundreds of thousands of women and children. It received its death-blow when the Credit Act placed women who were unprovided for on the State pension list, and included their children in the arrangement. Indeed it may be said that sweating and orthodox political economy expired together. Neither was possible without the element of competition, and the effect upon the long-worshipped science of the withdrawal of competition was much the same as that of placing a waxen image in an oven—it became forthwith a formless puddle. The Pauper Immigration Act prevented what would otherwise have been the instant result of the Credit Act, namely, the importation of droves of foreign serfs to toil sixteen and eighteen hours a day for the food of a street cur and the housing of swine ; and this fact, coupled with the imminent abolition of capitalism, led to a social phenomenon of considerable interest and importance.

It was notorious that the bulk of the ever-growing stream of foreign pauper immigrants were victims of the anti-Semitic campaigns which had been carried on for so many years in Russia, Germany, the Danubian States and elsewhere, with a ferocity worthy of the middle ages. The Jewish community at this moment represented by far the greatest individual wealth and the most abject general poverty in the whole of the old world. Hebrew millionaires regulated the business of the Eastern hemisphere, dictated to its rulers, dominated its finance, made colossal profits out of the Governments to whom they lent money, and amassed half their wealth through the very monarchs who were harrying the poorer Jews out

of their realms almost with fire and sword.* As long as Great Britain remained open for the refugees, and the labour which ought to have maintained our countrymen could be monopolised by aliens, the princes of the Jewish race rarely raised a finger against the bigoted and merciless oppression to which their unfortunate brethren were subjected all over Europe. But the advent to power of a Collectivist Government revolutionised the position and policy of the Semitic colony in Great Britain. For the first time, they found that this country was no longer available as a place into which all the Jewish pauperism of the continent could be shot *ad libitum*; and they were forced to face the unpleasant duty of protecting their co-religionists at the place of persecution, wherever it happened to be. This involved a considerable change of political base, and the adoption by this country of an exclusionist policy led inevitably to a Jewish social question being added to the political one.

To most Jews above the grade of hopeless paupers, the very idea of a community which proposed to dispense with huckstering, the exploiting of other people, and the driving of bargains, was a dream of Gehenna—a thing so inconceivable that the Hebrew element in our politics and commerce was the very last to recognise the absolute imminence of State Industrialism, and was quite taken by surprise by the rapid evolution of the new régime. But when the tendency of events in the immediate future was distinctly grasped, the result was a continuous and increasing exodus of the Jews from Great Britain, compared with which that from Egypt of old was insignificant.

The whole genius of the race was hostile to a régime which meant equality of opportunity instead of advantage to superior cunning and duplicity, and which substituted an automatic average of comfortable maintenance for the spoils of the huckster, jobber, speculator, and financier. Profit-making had entered into the Jews' very bones, and they shook the dust off

* Literally so in the case of the Russian persecution of 1891-2-3.

their feet against a country which was about to deprive them of the power to exercise their national skill in driving a bargain. Every Jew who had anything to sell sold it and departed with curses to his self-chosen exile in the Americas, Australasia, the new settlements on the Congo and Zambesi, or the freshly exploited provinces of Siam and Southern China.

The exodus affected all branches of trade and commerce. The number of sales of stock by retiring tradesmen, merchants and small manufacturers was without precedent, and for the moment brought down prices in some lines of supply to the lowest point ever known. Businesses were given up in all directions, and as no one would buy a goodwill or start any fresh private undertaking under existing circumstances, the number of centres of distribution underwent a noticeable diminution. The amount of portable property conveyed out of the country almost passed belief, and there is no doubt that the Heirlooms Act was violated in every direction.

That the results of this movement should tend to facilitate the completion of the Phalanx programme is obvious. Every item of Individualist enterprise thus eliminated from the total in operation throughout the country was a difficulty the less. Every Jew who took his departure to other shores left behind one fewer of those who, under a Collectivist régime, would undoubtedly prove to be the most restless and discontented of the community. The rapid increase in the callings-in of advances and loans only failed to produce a commercial panic because there arose a general indisposition to respond to pressure of this kind amongst the indebted. Lenders felt that if they strained matters to extremity the result would only be a practical total loss to themselves, whereas under the Phalanx programme there was a probability of at all events a partial recognition of claims to compensation.

The withdrawal of the Hebrew capitalist influence from Great Britain had far-reaching consequences abroad. Deprived of the asylum hitherto always open to them, the oppressed Jews of Russia, Germany, and Eastern Europe demanded with

one voice from their millionaire compatriots the protection or toleration they could so easily exact from the various governments through their financial connections; and the pressure could no longer be resisted. The result in the end was a gradual cessation of the mediæval policy of the States concerned, and an approximation to the rudiments of justice and humanity in their dealings with the Semitic element in their populations.

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In connection with the more public aspects of intemperance and immorality there was even before the end of the autumn of 1904 a change that was obvious to the most casual observer. All but a fraction of the forlorn hosts which had formerly been the scandal and despair of modern society had disappeared. The gentlemen of the pavement who had been wont to make night hideous in the neighbourhood of every public house were rarely seen and still more rarely heard. Very many thousands of them were of course in durance vile, or being licked into shape by perspiring drill-sergeants in the South Pacific; others had been withdrawn from the large towns and distributed about the country on the State farms and works; the rest were precluded from indulging in their former idiosyncracies of perpetually getting drunk, quarrelsome, noisy, or offensive, by the stringent provisions of the Drink Traffic Act and the new views of police duty inculcated thereby.

The little waifs and strays of our large towns, the street Arabs and gutter sparrows, had been swept off wholesale. Instead of crowding the alleys of the slums till midnight, they were now learning, working, and drilling far away in the country or at the seaside, eating their fill day by day, sleeping between clean sheets, washing themselves regularly, and beginning to grow like human beings again.

That terrible army of the lost against whom every man's and woman's hand seems by common consent to have been raised in all ages, the first and last victims of every form of so-called vilisation, the everlasting product alike of the poverty of the

poor and the wealth of the rich, was now only represented by a few hardened and almost imbecile stragglers.

It is curious that nothing in the discussion of the Credit Act had excited the ire of the professional philanthropists so much as the fact that its benefits were to be open to the "undeserving," and that women whose previous careers utterly excluded them from any chance of obtaining decent employment were for the first time to be placed beyond the necessity of choosing between a life of infamy, the workhouse, or starvation. That the street drab should be assigned an income equally with the poor seamstress, and both without working for it, struck the patrons of the Charity Organisation Society and similar institutions as something partaking alike of blasphemy and insanity. The very essence of their creed was that only the meritorious deserved sympathy and assistance, that the vile because they were vile must be forced to remain in their vileness, and that it was putting a premium on vice to attempt to remove or alleviate its consequences. That a single act of ignorance, weakness, indiscretion, or folly was made by their own system to lead inevitably and hopelessly to a life of vice was a thing these worthy people could never be brought to see; and they remained to the end dissatisfied with the extinction of the public aspect of immorality by what they considered unscientific and unorthodox means.

The leaders of the Phalanx, who had never concerned themselves with any questions of sentiment, improvement of human nature, or verdicts upon individual merit or demerit, but were acting upon economic lines of scientific precision, had of course known all along, not only that the complete extinction of prostitution was one of the simplest and easiest of their proposed achievements, but that under a Collectivist régime it would occur quite automatically and unavoidably. As a matter of fact, within two months of the passing of the Credit Act (which it must be noted had quite other objects in view besides) the so-called "social evil" in Great Britain was non-existent for all practical purposes. Out of the 120,000 women to whom

the streets had offered the only possible means of obtaining subsistence, and the slightly larger additional number who were from time to time compelled to eke out their wretched earnings at honest work in the same way, only five per cent. of the former and an infinitesimal fraction of the latter had any motive whatever for following their previous mode of life the moment absolute necessaries were secured to them. The few who remained were those with whom the passion for dress had either survived or extinguished every other feeling, and the unfortunate wretches whose craving for drink demanded a gratification with which the conditions of the State Credits (especially that of drink being obtainable only at the State Stores) perpetually interfered. The rest vanished into private life of some kind or other, with an advantage to themselves and the community cheaply purchased at a cost less than that of half-a-dozen ironclads, or a "little war" in some remote dependency.

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One confidently expected and indeed inevitable result of the recent legislation was to fill all places of amusement to overflowing. The various halls opened by the Recreation Board were inadequate as yet to provide for the demand caused by the privileges of the State Credits and the limitation of excessive drinking arising from the operation of the Drink Traffic Act, although as we have stated they quadrupled the existing accommodation. Even with the prospect of only a few months' existence as private enterprises, places for variety entertainments were opened in all directions. The owners of large public houses, finding their returns falling off considerably under the new Drink Act and the competition of the State Stores (where alone intoxicants could be procured by holders of State Credits), turned them into music-halls by scores and hundreds, and licences for these conversions, subject to structural safety, were accorded gratis by the Recreation Board. Gin palaces, which had made a profit out of a standing popu-

lation (during business hours) of a few score soakers, now made twice the money out of the hundreds of sitters before the curtain, who paid as much for their admissions as they had spent over the bar counter under the old régime. The dramatic and musical professions experienced a boom unparalleled in their history, and the "Era" advertisement columns were now almost monopolised by managerial requirements.

The rush of building operations, both of construction and alteration, not only in connection with the above but all over the country, was without precedent. The Agriculture Board required a vast amount of residential property to be constructed at various central localities, and had to use tents and wooden huts in many cases till suitable buildings were ready. The main drainage and sewerage works of the towns were proceeding with all possible rapidity, and the light railways on the State farms took up all the unskilled labour available. The proportion between what the unemployed had formerly cost the country and what they now earned and spent in wages, together with at least £100,000,000 per annum taken out of the drink traffic and devoted to necessaries and comforts, produced a marked increase of activity and prosperity in the retail trades. Many branches of commerce and manufacture were greatly stimulated by the demand for iron rails, machinery, building materials, seeds, drainage and farming requisites, &c.; and the total ruin of the country, which had been prophesied as certain to follow within six months of a Collectivist ministry being formed, seemed at this juncture decidedly remote.

Such were some of the results of the session of 1904, so far as they were apparent in the few months that followed the prorogation of Parliament; and it could not but be admitted that the benefits conferred on the community, whether they were permanent or otherwise, were out of all proportion to any inconvenience that might have been caused to individuals.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT the verdict of the constituencies in the election of 1904 had been an emphatic endorsement of the Phalanx programme as a whole could not be doubted; and the earlier measures which of necessity inaugurated that programme must be taken to have been accepted in advance by the electorate. But as regards the more drastic changes in the labour system and in the general economy of the nation which were intended to follow the initial steps, it was an open question how far they were as yet distinctly called for or understood by the electors.

A definite rate of credit-allowance was an integral portion of the scheme for nationalising the productive, distributive and administrative industries of the country. Exhaustive inquiries had therefore been made into the resources of the United Kingdom, both as regards its normal rate of production and the more immediate probabilities of increase or diminution in various special directions. Some of the grounds for the conclusions eventually arrived at were necessarily hypothetical. But after making every allowance for doubtful factors in the problem, the statistics as to the national income, and the proposed sharers therein, seemed to be somewhat as follows.

The number of persons to be entitled to the full allowance of effectives and pensionaries under the original Phalanx classification was estimated to be a little over 23,090,000. This included: men (effectives or over sixty years of age), 12,989,500; unmarried women over fifty, 1,202,000; and married women, 8,908,000. The list of non-effectives was calculated to reach nearly 18,605,000, including unmarried women under fifty, 3,509,000, and children, 15,095,000. The total population of the United Kingdom at this date was about

41,705,000.

On the other hand the resources of the nation in the shape of annual income were at the lowest estimate of the value of

£2,142,800,000.

Of this, £2,082,000,000 represented returns for income-tax, together with calculations of unassessed incomes and of trade wages, &c.; whilst £60,000,000 stood for the estimated annual increase of produce under the Agriculture Board during the next two years (after which this item would rise until the proposed present maximum of £240,000,000 additional yield was secured). At least £150,000,000* was reckoned to be fraudulently withheld from income-tax assessment; but of this only about £50,000,000 was taken into account.

The cost of necessary imports could be pretty accurately set down at £200,000,000 per annum,† and the resulting balance for division by means of State Credits was reckoned at £1,892,800,000; permitting of a credit of 21s. per week for each effective and pensionary, and of 14s. per week (on the proposed scale) for each non-effective. In other words, every adult male, every adult woman who was married, or over fifty years of age, or incapacitated from public service, would receive a separate annual income of £54 12s.; whilst every person

* That this was probably an under-estimate will appear from the following considerations. According to Mr. Mulhall's calculations ("Dict. of Statistics," page 278), half of the whole annual income of the country, which was £1,350,000,000 in 1892 (Fabian Tract, No. 5; estimate based on the calculations of Professors Leone Levi and A. Marshall, Sir Louis Mallet, Messrs. R. Giffen and Mulhall) was enjoyed by 25,000 persons. These ought therefore to have contributed (at 6d. in the pound) close on £17,000,000 of income-tax, irrespective of the contributions of the less wealthy members of the trading and professional classes—the latter as a matter of notoriety being scandalously over-assessed. *But the whole amount received from income-tax in 1892 was only* £13,431,000. Again, after deducting (from the total income of £1,350,000,000) the estimated working-class income of £500,000,000 (Fabian Tract, No. 5, page 8), and the trade and professional incomes of £360,000,000 (*ibid*, page 7), there remained £490,000,000 a year received by the small class (about 450,000 persons) of property-owners. The income-tax of this latter class ought to have been £12,250,000, besides the £6,500,000 paid by the traders, &c. (allowing for £108,000,000 a year of income exempted or abated—Fabian Tract, No. 39), or £18,750,000 in all. But, as stated above, less than £13,500,000 was actually received.

The difference would represent in the one case £140,000,000 a year, and in the other £210,000,000 a year, fraudulently withheld from income-tax assessment.

† This included raw materials (in millions of pounds sterling), cotton 40, silk 13, wool 30, wood 18, leather and hides 9, furs and skins 4½; together with coffee and cocoa 6½, fruit 6, sugar 22, tea 12, wines and spirits 9, and sundries 27 (Annual Statistical Abstract, Board of Trade).

under 21, and every unmarried woman between 21 and 50 years of age who was not a public employé, would receive a separate annual income of £36 8s. This would of course be exclusive of free education, transit, medical assistance, amusements, postal facilities, &c., provided under the "Free Clause" of the programme.

These estimates were equal to an average annual income of £46 10s. per head of the whole population; and it may be here mentioned that calculations gone into by the Phalanx about a dozen years previously had indicated very much the same rate as being probable at the period now under discussion. First among the considerations which suggested this forecast was the steady increase of average annual income from £20 10s. per head in 1840 to £26 per head in 1860,* and to £36 in 1891.† Further, the fixed capital of the country was estimated at the same period‡ to be increasing at the rate of £200,000,000 per annum, the interest of which alone would represent at least £7,000,000 of additional income every year. But the most accurate basis of prophecy was furnished by the official statistics of property under probate and succession duty, and of the assessments to income-tax. Taking quinquennial periods, these showed the following rates of expansion:

	Property under duty.	Incomes assessed.
1882	£147,600,000	£601,450,977
1887	181,865,000	629,397,962
1892	241,453,000	710,752,684§

These figures would suggest a probable ratio of increase, between 1892 and 1897, of 32 per cent. Applied to the whole national income of £1,350,000,000 in 1892,‖ this would give a total of £1,742,000,000 in 1897, and (at the same percentage of expansion) of £2,352,000,000 in 1902, irrespective of the proposed development of agriculture, and of the estimate of

* Mulhall, "Dict. of Statistics," page 245. † Fabian Tract, No. 5.
‡ R. Giffen, "Essays in Finance," II., page 407.
§ Statistical Abstract, 1893.
‖ See note * preceding page.

concealed income referred to above. That the Phalanx estimates in 1904 fell somewhat short of this forecast was doubtless to be explained by the circumstance that the income of the wage-earners increased at a very much smaller ratio than that of the propertied classes.

No deduction from the total aggregate was made in respect of what used to be the Imperial Budget (now to be merged in the general accounts of administration). This was owing to the fact that the only allowance requiring to be made would be in connection with the payment of interest on consols and on local bonds to foreign holders of these securities, and with the actual hard cash expenditure of the diplomatic, naval, and military services outside the realm. The total amount of all these would be relatively insignificant.

*

The Government estimates did not of themselves arouse much question or criticism. It was true that the Agriculture Board, in proposing to confine its operations to the 30,000,000 acres already under culture of some kind or other, and to make no particular effort to increase the average yield of produce beyond an extra £8 per acre,* was placing a limit on the expansion of national agriculture which might without difficulty have been enormously exceeded. It provided for the substitution of home-grown food products for foreign to the extent of £160,000,000, and for the addition of fully one-third (£80,000,000) of our whole consumption. This was of course to meet the necessity for bringing absolute plenty to the doors of the millions who for generations had been habitually underfed, if not starved. But in thus making up the £240,000,000 of extra food-products above referred to, the Government considered their programme in this connection fulfilled. Nothing was to be gained by growing more food than was necessary for

* In addition to the £5 10s. which was the existing average of arable land and which represented less than one half of the practicable wheat-yield—by no means the most paying crop.

the full requirements of our own population (except in regard to a certain contemplated storage of grain to meet the contingency of bad harvests), since a market abroad for any surplus was out of the question. It was intended to accumulate two years' supply of cereal products as a security for uniform prices in this country, whatever might be the condition of the grain market here or abroad at the moment; but beyond this the expansion of agriculture, until required by increase of population, would serve no object whatever.

*

In the case of that portion of the national wealth which arose from the manufacturing and mining industries, it was complained that the Government took no account of the enormously increased output which could not fail to arise from the uninterrupted working of all the mills, factories, works and mines throughout the country when strikes, lock-outs and labour disturbances no longer diminished or hampered the full freedom of production. This was irrespective of the inevitable increase of the ranks of the producers (with the corresponding facilities for increased production), by the transfer thereto of the innumerable distributors and middlemen for whose services, in their existing capacities, all occasion would presently cease.

Against this objection it was simply represented that, while the development of the national resources above indicated was not only probable but practically certain in the more or less immediate future, nevertheless there were no means of forecasting either the extent or the date of the addition to our annual wealth which was under discussion. The Government could only rely on absolute facts; and it had, moreover, to take into account the necessarily imperfect character of certain elements (such as trade wages) of the calculations upon which the estimates of national income (*i.e.*, production) were based.

It was further objected that while we were actually paying over £110,000,000 annually for foreign raw materials, by far

the greater part of these (especially the imports of cotton and wool) were bought simply to make up into fabrics for re-export in part payment of our foreign food bill, irrespective of the timber, silk, fancy articles, etc., we required for home use. With the expansion of our agriculture the necessity for exporting British manufactures would diminish in proportion, and therefore altogether too large a deduction from the estimated balance had been made on this score.

The reply to this was, that in the first place the enormously increased demand at home for the very fabrics in question which would arise instantly on thirty millions of the population being raised from poverty to comfort would of itself absorb even the present output of our textile manufactures. In the second place, there would remain an almost unlimited field of external trade to be maintained in order to supply our citizens with the innumerable articles of luxury, only obtainable from foreign countries, the demand for which would grow step by step with our national comfort and prosperity.

An objection of a different character was that the Government made no allowance for any scheme of compensation with which the expropriation of specific vested interests might be accompanied, and to which it stood committed, and which was understood to involve the conversion of income into State-credit annuities. This criticism had of course been anticipated, and was met by the rejoinder that at present no estimate was possible of the extent to which compensation might be called for. The system of universal State-credits would of course provide for all but a few of the wealthier claimants, and any addition subsequently found necessary or suitable would have to be met either by direct taxation or by a diminution of the rate of credit-allowance. In the meantime no actual inconvenience or hardship could arise, and the result could in no case seriously affect the general estimates under discussion.

Finally, it may be here mentioned that many persons, who could not find any convenient loophole for criticism in the Phalanx estimates of the future aggregate and individual in-

comes of the country, relieved their minds by suggesting that it was very lucky the Collectivists had dropped on an era for their experiment which permitted of credits being assigned to the citizens so much larger than would have been possible at an earlier date. It is hardly necessary to point out that comments of this kind displayed a complete misapprehension of the real question at issue. The economic basis of the general Collectivist programme had absolutely nothing to do with the financial condition of the country, good or bad; and the equal division of the national income was expedient just in proportion, *not to the wealth of the community, but to its poverty.* It was perfectly obvious that as every movement of the economic see-saw which showed one income above the *average* would show another below it, the mischiefs of relative riches would be all the more disastrous when the average income was at a low level. To those who could grasp the fundamental law that wealth in one direction could only mean precisely the same equivalent of poverty in another, it was clear that there was no previous period at which Collectivism, on economic grounds, would have entailed any disadvantage as compared with the date of our history.

The questions awaiting solution as an indispensable preliminary to the nationalisation of industry were three in number, and each of the three was a vital one.

The first was, would the producing (or artisan) class, as a whole, accept service under the State at the credit-rate of 21s. per week for each male worker, the wives of those who were married being entitled also to 21s. per week, and each child to 14s. per week?

In connection with this question arose another very obvious one, viz., what was to be the definition of the word "child"? It will be remembered that the complete scheme of the Phalanx programme called for universal free education up to the age of twenty-one. But the Government felt that so con-

siderable an extension of the years of tutelage might be difficult to establish at once over the whole area of population. It was therefore disposed to suggest that, for the present, the eighteenth year should be the earliest at which work should be commenced, and that no one should be employed by the State under that age. But on the other hand continued education up to the eighteenth year would be absolutely compulsory upon all citizens; and it was pointed out that this was the more necessary in the case of the imperfectly educated youth of both sexes who were now earning a living, and who under the new régime would have to give up the workshop and go back to school. Furthermore, in order to reduce as much as possible the loss to the individual and to society, arising from deficient culture, it was proposed that all who on account of disadvantages in early life, or for other reasons, found themselves at eighteen years of age lacking in the knowledge they wished to possess, should be at full liberty to continue their education up to the age of twenty-one, on the footing of non-effectives. The proposition, therefore, as regards the definition of "childhood" was that it should extend in any case up to the age of eighteen, and, if desired, for three years longer.

The second question had not as yet been made the subject of formal discussion, and was one of the utmost importance.

Under the existing industrial system there was a wide liberty exercised amongst the better-paid workmen, in all classes of productive labour, as regards the actual number of hours or days worked. In many trades there was no serious obstacle to a man leaving work for half a day or a day, if he chose to dispense with his wages for the time being. In several well-paid branches of industry it was quite a common thing for men to lose at least one day's wage now and then, and after special holidays a week or more was frequently spent

away from work.* Some employers, whether individuals or companies, tried or were able to enforce fines for losing time in this way; and with a good deal of justice, when it is remembered that in most large works (especially mines and quarries) the standing expenses were enormous, and admitted of no contraction whether work went on or not. But this was always resented or opposed by the men, who were satisfied to argue that if they chose to go without wages it was their business and not that of their employers.

Under the proposed new régime, this liberty of action on the part of the State servant would evidently be out of the question. By accepting State service, privileges were to be enjoyed of which the actual wages or credit was only a small part. In addition to the long list of advantages to be conferred gratuitously, of which frequent mention has been made, there were two others of the greatest importance. One of these was the promise to the worker of uninterrupted employment up to the age of superannuation; the other was the provision for old age, sickness, and incapacity, not only for the worker, but for all his family.

It was evident that under such circumstances any claim to the option of leaving off work arbitrarily, subject merely to a *pro rata* reduction of credit, would be inadmissible; inasmuch as the other privileges which formed part of the State return to the worker for his labour could not, like the credit, be discontinued or reduced on occasion, but must remain available under all conditions.

Apart from all this, there was a fatal objection to permitting any latitude to workers under the Collectivist programme to sacrifice wages (or the equivalent credit) at their option. This lay in the fact, that the credit of their wives and families would go on independently of the workers, and would be receivable

* Notably in Lancashire during Whit-week and after. The total amount of time thus spent probably fell short of the holidays usually taken by the commercial and professional classes, but the vacations of the latter were necessarily more systematised.

irrespective of the husbands' and fathers' industry or idleness. It was obvious that a premium to shirkers and skulkers would be offered, if they were allowed to sacrifice their own credit in order to sponge on the credits of their families, who would thus be (in proportion) deprived of what was intended to be only an adequate provision for the comforts and necessaries of life. The very arrangements proposed to raise the universal load of anxiety from the breadwinners of families would be utilised to plunder women and children, if any loophole were left for loafing at the expense of others. It was true that the provisions of the new Vagrant Act could be applied to cases of incidental or habitual absence from work. But the machinery would always be too cumbersome to operate in such instances with the requisite facility and promptitude; and it was therefore necessary to include, among the conditions of State service, that of the obligation (under penalty of imprisonment) to work the full recognised days and hours in any trade or occupation as a *sine qua non*. Provision was of course intended to be made (as in all the existing Government services where a fixed annual salary was customary) for leave of absence to be granted on occasion, or on a medical certificate excusing an employé from attendance. These latter regulations had been in regular operation amongst hundreds of thousands of civil servants for more than a century without causing any conspicuous inconvenience or dissatisfaction.

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A third point was one which involved a good deal of compromise and concession, but was at least as essential as the other two.

Under a fully organised Collectivist régime, the exactly equal credit accorded to each worker would imply as a matter of course the lightening of the burden of the less popular occupations, and the increasing of that of the favourite ones, by adjustment of the respective hours of labour in exact proportion to the rate of volunteering for the different callings until equi-

librium established itself.* But this automatic balancing of industrial detail would of necessity involve a very prolonged and laborious process of experiment, covering probably several years, and at the outset it was highly improbable that it could be even entered upon. On the other hand, no Government could charge itself with the assumption of industrial direction unless the chief factor in the problem—the supply of labour—were as much a fixed quantity as the number of soldiers and sailors were to the State departments charged with the defence of the country. It was admitted that the widest discrepancy existed between the arduousness and the remuneration of various avocations. The easiest (such as clerkships) were as a rule the best paid; and the most disagreeable nearly always involved the longest hours of labour. But any attempt even to initiate a more equitable adjustment of the relative burden of toil in different occupations would obviously involve an almost hopeless delay in inaugurating the new régime. There remained, therefore, the simple question to be propounded:

Would the labouring classes of the country accept an immense and fundamental (but admittedly imperfect) improvement in their condition at once, or prefer to delay all the offered advantages indefinitely in order to secure, at some later date, ideal perfection?

The first alternative involved of course such an acceptance of State service on the part of the producers (with about the usual eight hours' day, as would enable the Government to proceed with its reorganisation of the national industry. It would thus be entirely undisturbed by the prospect of any labour problem for several years, and could establish the new régime on a footing of security, completeness, and freedom from all disquieting or embarrassing elements. The second alternative would probably jeopardise all that had been already gained. It would leave the national industry open to all the defects, vices, and dangers which had tormented the community for more

* See *ante*, pages 5 and 26; and, for an exhaustive description of this method of adjusting credit to occupation, Bellamy's "Looking Backward," Chap. VII.

than three generations. It would strengthen the party of reaction, and involve a fresh struggle at a later date with all the disadvantages of loss of time, effort, and prestige.

CHAPTER XIX.

To settle the question as to how far the proletariat was prepared to facilitate the task of the Collectivist Ministry, special steps had now to be taken. It is a curious instance of the survival of ancient prejudice that many persons, entirely in sympathy with Collectivism, quite seriously proposed a fresh election to give the Government the required mandate, overlooking the fact that *the only class entitled to deliver a verdict upon the points at issue was that of the actual producers.* To arrive at their views, the machinery of the Trade-Unions was put into operation.

Now that the Unions had become thorough, though somewhat tardy, disciples of Collectivism, the enormous political and administrative advantages of their vast organisation became for the first time completely apparent. Whatever might be the case with a few of the less stable groups, especially those of the lowest grades of unskilled and continually pauperised labour, the experience of many years had shown that the immense majority of the large and wealthy Unions, consisting of the mining, manufacturing, and building artisans, were characterised by a completeness of organisation, a precision of discipline, and a unanimity of *esprit de corps* which at this juncture were of incalculable value. In the absence of such elements any attempt to organise industry on Collectivist lines would have involved difficulties probably insurmountable. Nothing but the most compact, unhesitating, and intelligent support of the proletariat as a whole could render the scheme of State Industrialism practicable, and failing such support any move in that direction would have been simple madness.

That such an obvious fact was at this stage of our national history not universally understood or at all events accepted, is probably the most striking testimony ever likely to be furnished of the extent to which the slave-driving tradition had become bred in the very bone of the average Briton. Even now a respectable minority of the community openly or secretly affected to despise the policy of "appealing to the lower orders." They professed to recognise, in the necessity for obtaining the support of the proletariat, the lowest depth of degradation to which a Government could descend. Even now the old catch phrases of "agitators," "demagogues," "truckling to the mob," "pandering to ignorant prejudice," "dragging our institutions through the mud," and all the hoary Billingsgate of the property interest, rang out with almost their pristine vigour. Once again, as on countless previous occasions, the country was "going to the dogs."

It is indeed marvellous that even at the date of which we speak, the truth was not universally grasped that THE PRODUCERS WERE THE NATION—that they were everything, and the rest absolutely nothing. In comparison with the men who actually grew our food, made our clothes, and built our houses, no other class had any real value or importance whatever.* *These* were self-supporting, self-sufficient. All others were utterly dependent upon them for the necessaries of existence, and could only keep alive by consent of the producers. The latter were the real State ; the aristocracy, the landlords, the professions, the employers, the men of business, the retailers, middlemen, brokers, jobbers, agents, sweaters, speculators, and *chevaliers d'industrie* of every order and degree were merely the excrescences, the hangers-on, the parasites of the great army of labour. All classes of the community except the proletariat were purely and simply the entozoa of the "body politic." Why the workers should for so long have submitted to the parasites who battened on them, is one of the insoluble pro-

* Or indeed (upon politico-economical grounds) any right to exist at all, except in so far as they performed the bare essentials of distribution.

blems of history ; and it may safely be predicted that generations hence the student will continue to befog himself over the unaccountable patience of the indispensable millions and the infinite audacity of the unnecessary and useless few.

That a decision affecting the destinies of the nation should rest with those whose work made the nation's existence possible, was therefore a perfectly logical position to be assumed by the Government. Only the crass stupidity, bigotry, shortsightedness, or deliberate treachery of the working-men leaders had prevented the position being anticipated years before by the producers themselves. As long ago as 1885, the Trade-Unions could have returned at least 450 members of the House of Commons, if their officials had not utterly failed to perceive (or at all events, to point out) the true policy of the proletariat. Had the Unions, instead of continually fighting to share in the capitalists' plunder of the public, devoted their energies (and, say, five per cent. of their funds) to acquire control over the means of production, the new régime would have been hastened by half a generation at least.

Such were the conditions under which the Cabinet, through the Board of Trade, took the necessary steps to invite a plebiscite of all the Trade-Unions on the following three propositions, the acceptance of which would constitute the mandate empowering the Government to proceed at once with the nationalisation of the industries of production and distribution.

I.

The State-credit assigned to each State servant to be at the rate of 21s. per week for effectives and pensionaries, and 14s. per week for non-effectives.

II.

Continuous work (except on the recognised holidays) to be obligatory on all State servants, subject to application for incidental necessary leave of absence, or medical prohibition of attendance ; and to an adequate annual vacation.

III.

The service of the State to be accepted for five years certain, at the rate of hours per day prevailing under Union rules for the various trades (but not exceeding eight hours), pending the re-adjustment of these hours by the State.

As a guide to a correct estimate of the relation between these proposals, in their future operation, and the economic aspects of the existing régime, it was intimated that prices would be provisionally regulated on the basis of an advance of five per cent. on actual first cost of production when the latter could be accurately ascertained, and on the average of the preceding five years' wholesale prices at first hand when the exact cost of production was uncertain. On the assumption by the State of all the house property in the country, it was contemplated that rents would be re-adjusted on the principle of charging a low percentage on the true cost price of construction, *i.e.*, the first price of materials and labour, without profit on either. The value of the land would be practically left out of the question as regards all but cases of specially favourable sites. In no case was it probable that a quarter of the present rent would be exceeded.

From these considerations it could be gathered that, under the new régime, house-rent and the cost of necessaries combined would be probably somewhat less than a third* of what they were under the old; and that the value of the credit unit would therefore be equal to about three times that of the gold unit under Individualism. In other words £1 of credit would purchase about as much as three sovereigns under the old system, and the credit income of 21s. per week now offered to effectives would be equal (irrespective of the various free privileges accompanying it) to nearly £164 per annum; it being recollected that *every member of a household would enjoy a separate effective or non-effective credit at an equivalent rate.*

It was also intimated that every employé might expect four clear weeks' leave per annum, irrespective of the recognised public holidays, and the half-day weekly.

* The actual cost of production at this time would roughly average: Bread (per quartern loaf), 1½d.; milk (per quart), 1½d.; meat (per lb.), 4d.; bacon (per lb.), 3d.; groceries, one-third of retail prices; vegetables and fruit, from one-sixth to one-twelfth of ditto; haddock, herring, mackerel, and cod (capture and sea-transport), about 1s. per cwt. The retail prices of course represented half-a-dozen profits and the monstrous railway charges.

The Plebiscite of the Trades.

These fundamental changes, proposed for the industrial organisation of the country and the remuneration of labour, were formally laid before all the branches of all the Unions in September, 1904, with a view to the instruction of delegates to a Congress of the Federated Trades to be held in London early in October. Each proposition was to be voted on separately, and the votes at the last of three ballots were to be part of the instructions of every delegate. Thus the exact number of individual votes for and against each proposition throughout the whole proletariat would be before the Congress when it assembled.

The debates in the branches showed from the first an enormous preponderance of opinion in favour of each of the three clauses of the "project," and the hostile minorities diminished with each successive ballot. The triple divisions were taken with a week's interval between each, and the aggregate votes of the whole Trade-Union electorate, as recorded at the final ballot, were announced at the Congress as follows (taking the three propositions in order) :—

I.	For,	10,489,229	Against,	113,704
II.	„	10,432,623	„	170,310
III.	„	10,480,462	„	122,471*

The verdict of the workers thus showed that the idea of a five years enlistment in the industrial army was less acceptable than the rate of pay offered, and the obligation of continuous work more unpopular than either. But the number of non-contents was as a whole utterly insignificant, and the result of the plebiscite amounted to a practically unanimous acceptance of the Government "project" in its entirety.

At each final ballot a resolution had been carried by acclamation, which was announced at the Congress as follows :

* It would seem from these figures that the voters on one section were the voters on all ; or, if not, that the exceptions balanced each other. But as the three divisions were probably taken in all cases within a few minutes of each other, the coincidence is less noteworthy than appears at first sight.

"This Congress of Delegates from the Federated Trades of the United Kingdom, instructed by the direct personal votes of ten and a half millions of workers, declares for the Nationalisation of Industry, accepts the programme and proposals of the Phalanxist Government, and emphatically pledges the Unions and their members, one and all, to the punctual, efficient, and energetic carrying on of the national production under the proposed Collectivist régime."

This decision of the proletariat constituted, in effect, the mandate for the Great Revolution of 1905.

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Events had developed so rapidly since the parliamentary election that it was almost forgotten that the borough and other local councils were as yet far from being *en rapport* with the new movement. It was essential to any further developments of the industrial programme that they should be largely, if not altogether, carried out by decentralised organisations. Nothing but obstruction could be expected from the property and capitalist interests of both the old parties, still dominant in all the representative bodies except Parliament itself. The November elections of town, district, and parish councils were therefore prepared for by the Phalanx with all the energy demanded by the magnitude of the task to which the Collectivists stood committed.

Scarcely a single seat held by an Individualist was left unattacked, and the immense interests at stake brought into the field a class of candidate altogether superior to that usually associated with local electoral contests. Every effort was made by the Phalanxists to secure energetic and experienced business men for their nominees, together with the ablest representatives of the Unions. The latter had of course the most exact acquaintance with the requirements of their own class, and with the *minutiæ* of the industries in which they were engaged; and probably a more severely practical body than the muster roll of Phalanx candidates never were ranged under one banner before.

Very little excitement or enthusiasm, real or spurious, characterised the elections, and on the part of the Phalanx meetings and speeches were almost absent. All the members knew exactly what was proposed, as far as it could be known at all. Platform eloquence, canvassing, and journalistic exhortations were quite needless and useless in their case, and nobody wasted his breath with preaching to the converted. As regards their opponents, neither oratory, intimidation, bribery, or coaxing could now affect the issue. It was felt to be a mere trial of strength, wherein all the combatants had made up their minds long before.

When the result of the various ballots were announced, it was found that the old parties had for all practical purposes vanished. Where the wealthy employers had voted as one man for the Individualist candidate, the employés had with equal unanimity supported his opponent. The wage and salary earners were everywhere for the Collectivists almost *en masse;* and in a contest of numbers the whole electoral power of the property and capital interest was a mere drop in the ocean.

The local and imperial representation of the country was now in accord, and the requisite conditions for the successful carrying out of the State Industrialist programme were for the first time present. From this time forward the questions that arose (with the exception of compensation) were those of detail rather than of principle, and the labours of the national leaders became administrative rather than militant. The fighting was over, and the more difficult task of utilising the victory now lay before the Collectivists.

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The financial arrangements of Ministers had provided for the collection of the whole of the taxes for the financial year 1904-5 by the 1st of January 1905, and it had been intimated that the usual delay of a couple of months, which had been for many years permitted to the collectors, would this year be dis-

continued. The autumn and winter of 1904 were therefore utilised by the Government in strengthening their financial position to the utmost in their power. It was an advantageous circumstance, in this respect, that an immense impetus had been imparted to the genuine trade of the country, as distinguished from merely speculative thimble-rigging, stock-jobbing, and produce-gambling. A greatly increased demand for food and clothing had arisen from the development of home agriculture, from the various works inaugurated, and from the conversion of the unemployed into wage-earners. This had not only fully maintained the incomes on which the new taxes had been levied, but had made their collection far more easy than in the preceding spring—a date at which the country was suffering not only from years of depression but from the effects of the Coal Syndicate disturbances.

The total returns from all sources received in December 1904 amounted to £385,000,000, and there had in the meantime accrued under the Stamp clauses no less than £87,000,000, of which £22,500,000 was paid in connection with the transfer by death of eleven great landed estates alone. But in these and similar cases it must be remembered that the receipts necessarily to a very large extent took the form of the transferred land and property itself, not currency. The nominal value of this property for purposes of probate was wholly artificial and fictitious, as the rentals which constituted its apparent value could scarcely in any case be collected after the coming year.*

As the supplementary estimates for 1904-5 in connection with the special programme of the Ministry provided for all outlay up to April 1905, the United Kingdom was now in a

* As an instance of this may be cited a piece of land within a stone's throw of the Bank of England containing a little less than an acre. This happened to be vacant at the moment of its falling into the hands of the Excise, as the site was being excavated from the foundations of a set of offices. The ground rent of this patch was £102,000 a year in 1903. Within twelve months it had dropped to "prairie value," the site having (apart from commercial competition) nothing to recommend it.

position of financial security probably without parallel, although the unprecedented demand for coin had not been without its effect on the international exchanges. In view of the colossal balance held by the British Treasury* the rupee had been steadily going up to par, and the Indian Government found itself nearly £7,000,000 to the good through the advance.

It will be recollected that the particular industry of all others most necessary to the national prosperity at this juncture, namely the coal supply, was already regulated by the Board of Trade. The result of the plebiscite and of the local elections enabled the Government to put into immediate operation (as regards the miners) the provisions already existing in the Colliery Act. It accordingly introduced the credit system, with the announced rate of wages of 21s. a week to the workmen, the same allowance to their wives, and the 14s. per head to the non-effective members of their families. The same scale was simultaneously introduced amongst the employés of the other State Boards, all the Civil servants of the Crown, and the dockyard and Government factory operatives. Those not satisfied with the change were released from any engagements into which they might have entered, and set at liberty to seek work in trades or occupations not yet under State Control. As regards the Civil Service not the slightest advantage was taken of the offer, beyond requests in some cases to be furnished with open-air work in the country. Some of the miners left the collieries, and of those all but a few (who probably went to Canada and the States) took to agricultural labour sooner or later. Every request by a Civil Service employé to take up productive, rather than administrative, work was acceded to as

* Of this about £35,000,000 was held in coin and bullion; the remainder being represented by foreign and colonial securities, to be realised abroad when occasion demanded. The estimated amount of money in the country was usually from £80,000,000 to £100,000,000 in gold and bullion, with £15,000,000 of silver and bronze (W. S. Jevons, "Investigations in Currency and Finance," 272; Mint Report, 1889).

a matter of course when practicable, as the whole policy of the Phalanx lay in converting the distributors and administrators into producers at the earliest possible moment.

The Agriculture Board, having its hands full, did not propose to extend the high farming system to more than another 8,000,000 acres this season, and it became necessary to arrange for the carrying on of the existing arrrangements on the remaining 14,000,000 acres under cultivation, on something like the old lines. In order not to lose the winter season of preparation, the local Chambers of Agriculture were therefore called upon to propose, at the earliest possible moment, schemes by which the areas under their cognizance might receive advances of capital for fertilisers, machinery, stock, improved seed, &c. The Board assumed nominal direction over the whole (under its statutory powers) for the sake of simplifying the transfer of temporary control to the local bodies, and the farmers in possession were (with a few exceptions) left as factors and agents under direction of the Chambers. Stock was increased by importation to the value of £35,000,000 and credit to the amount of £27,000,000 for fertilisers was assigned to the lands not under the direct control of the National Board. The most experienced farmers and agricultural chemists were elected by the Chambers to constitute the local directorates of those counties which were not under the Board, and these selected special representatives to maintain communication between themselves and the metropolitan chief office. This served both statistical and administrative purposes, and enabled the National Board to make the requisite calculations as to the amount of foreign import likely to be necessary.

The important question of distribution, under the coming régime, called for a somewhat considerable preliminary system of organisation. As soon as the Collectivist local Councils were elected, the Board of Supply issued a circular to all the municipalities. This requested them to appoint committees and sub-committees, for the purpose of recommending to the Board such steps as might be found locally expedient for the

concentration of arrangements for the retailing of merchandise, upon the plan of the State Stores already in operation. Certain broad principles were laid down for guidance, the chief being:

1st. In ordinary centres of population no single provision store should serve an area of less than half-a-mile radius; dress-fabric stores, one and a half miles; the warehouses for furniture, house-appointments, general goods and articles only occasionally in demand, two miles.

2nd. The premises selected for provision and fabric stores should wherever practicable be situated on a line of train, tram, or bus communication, and on a main street where these facilities did not exist. The property adjacent to railway stations or lines should be selected for storage and sale of coal, coke, lime, bricks, stone, timber, slates, chalk, sand, fertilisers, and all goods similar in bulk and weight, not used for domestic purposes.

3rd. Surveys and estimates should be prepared (*a*) for the conversion of office, warehouse, and shop property into pubiic dining-rooms, on the most complete scale, into flats for small or large families, and into residential clubs; and (*b*) for the wholesale destruction of defective house property to form squares and public gardens.

The utmost expedition was urged upon the local bodies to arrive at definite conclusions on the above points of reference, and a Special Commission of nearly five hundred of the leading architects and sanitary engineers was appointed by the Board of Supply early in December to represent the Board on the spot (in sub-committees of five) as fast as reports reached the central office.

The way was now clear for the most pregnant legislative undertaking recorded in history, and it is probable that no episode in ancient or modern times was watched by the civilised world with such profound interest as attended the steps taken to carry out the determination of the British nation that industrial, commercial, and social slavery should follow political despotism into oblivion.

CHAPTER XX.

To place Ministers in a position to deal with the task of nationalising the whole industry of the kingdom, Parliament was summoned at the beginning of January, 1905. A measure was forthwith presented by Ministers, within three clauses of which was comprised the whole transition from Individualism to Collectivism.

The following were the provisions of

THE NATIONAL PROPERTY BILL.

Clause I. vested the whole of the land and property of the United Kingdom, including shipping but excluding personal goods and chattels, in the Crown.

Clause II. assigned the administration of the same to certain Boards named, the regulations for the constitution of which, then and thereafter, were contained in a schedule attached to the Bill.

Clause III. recommended a certain measure of compensation to expropriated interests, and was accompanied by a schedule of regulations for the adjustment of the same.

*

The more important of these rules suggested the following bases of compensation. Buildings, works, machinery, plant, &c., (their utility for any purpose being conceded) were to be estimated at their nett constructive value for labour and materials exclusive of the profit made on both, no allowance being made for useless, insanitary, or hopelessly dilapidated property. Urban land would be estimated at its probable rental value exclusive of commercial competition (which would now of course cease to exist), as this would represent all that owners could get for it under a non-competitive régime, even if it remained in their own hands. Land in the country, other than specially desirable residential sites, would be estimated at agricultural value, country houses and seats with unfarmed

land being taken at the capitalised value of the owners' return for income-tax purposes. Dock, railway, tram, canal, gas, water, and electric light and power shares would be estimated on the basis of seven years' purchase of the average of the last five years' dividends.* Shipping would be taken at nett cost price of work and materials, less an allowance for deterioration and for inferior or inefficient machinery. Corporate bodies, with certain exceptions,† would be excluded from compensation.

All bonds, debentures, and obligations involving a public guarantee would be paid in full by State-credits to British subjects and in cash to foreign claimants, the compulsory registration or inscription of all owners (provided by the Taxation Act) being made permanent. All other payments would consist of credits to the extent of 3 per cent. annually on the sum granted in compensation. The capitalised amount would be inscribed to each person compensated, and any alienations of this inscribed capital during his or her lifetime would be subject to the operation of the transfer duties as a connected series of transactions in the same way as transfers by death or gift heretofore.‡

Finally, all claims to credit allowance in virtue of compensation granted were to cease at the death of the person compensated, or at the end of twenty-one years from the passing of the Act, whichever were the longer term.§ The compensation proposed by the Phalanx programme had never contemplated anything like an equivalent in cash or credit for the property resumed by the nation (to which it has always by right belonged), but only such a concession as would

* It being calculated that at least two-thirds of all the capital in these enterprises represented promotion expenses, contractors' profits, and the spurious value of the land occupied.

† Scientific and learned societies were among these.

‡ So that the action of the graduated scale should not be defeated by piecemeal transfers effected with a lapse of time between each.

§ For example: if a compensatee died in 1910, his heirs would receive his annuity till 1926; if he died in 1926 or later the payment of the annuity would cease with his death.

preclude the possibility of distinct hardship at the period of transition. The above limitation therefore met all equitable requirements, and prevented a permanent burden being laid upon a community which had already borne one too long.

*

It need scarcely be said that in spite of the long recognised imminence of this measure arising from the imperative demand of the electorate as expressed in the parliamentary election of twelve months back, in the plebiscite of the Trade-Unions, and in the results of the local contests in the autumn, the liveliest interest was aroused by the actual introduction of so stupendous a measure as the National Property Bill into the House of Commons.

Great as had been the effect of the Taxation Act upon the position of the landed and capitalist classes, it was of course insignificant compared with that which would be entailed by the present proposals. The interested castes were once more in arms to defend their vanishing privileges. Certain of the Peers joined the millionaire bankers, manufacturers, and capitalist landlords in openly threatening civil war if the Ministry persisted in the threatened atrocity; though where the fighters on their side were to come from did not appear. That nothing should debar the Upper House from throwing out the Bill was the mildest menace held out by the Opposition. Threats were freely indulged in that new peers (if created to swamp the recalcitrants) would not be permitted to sit and vote. The proffered compensation was stigmatised as adding insult to injury, and as being a futile attempt to disguise an act of pure spoliation. A petition praying the Sovereign to dissolve Parliament was actually being handed about amongst the Peers for signature, when, on the eve of the second reading of the Bill, rumours began to gain ground of a revolt amongst the supporters of the Government.

CHAPTER XXI.

HITHERTO Ministers had escaped the almost invariable danger attaching to an excessively large majority, namely, that of falling to pieces by reason of its very magnitude;* and their supporters had displayed every desire to follow them in the details as well as in the principles of their legislative proposals. But the compensation clauses of the new measure proved too much for a good many of the proletariat occupants of the Government benches.

When the Commons assembled for the debate on the National Property Bill, the ministerial whips were handed a list of over one hundred Phalanxist-members, who intended to support an amendment which declined to lay any burden on the country in respect of compensation to interests affected by the Bill. It was by no means the policy of Ministers to deprive the Peers of so excellent an opportunity of hearing a few home truths on the subject of their position, whether as landlords or legislators. They, therefore, allowed it to be understood that the Cabinet had no objection to an exhaustive debate on the proposed criticism of its policy. The order of the day was moved without comment by the Premier; and, amidst an ominous round of cheers from all parts of the House, including the Opposition benches (where a fleeting satisfaction was extracted from the split in the Collectivist ranks), the hostile amendment was brought forward.

It is with regret we find our space too limited to permit of any detailed account of the debate which followed, and which will go down to history as probably the last occasion on which parliamentary oratory was devoted to a theme of the very first rank. For more than half a century, in fact since the debates on the Factory Acts and the Corn Laws, very little in the shape of dramatic discussion had been possible. The utter abandonment of both the leading political parties to tactical

* As after the great Reform Act of 1832.

intrigue of the most contemptible description had a great deal to do with this. But a more cogent reason was the knowledge on both sides that the questions brought forward were mere excuses for electoral warfare, or red herrings to drag across the path of really urgent reform; that rhetorical flights were simply "copy" for the reporters, alike useless for influencing votes or proving the sincerity of the speakers; and that Parliament was organised down to the very end of the century solely to gull the electorate and bilk the nation of its rights. All this had reduced debate in the Lower House to the level of a stupid and distinctly immoral farce.

But the opposition to what was called the "ransom clause" elicited some of the most powerful speaking ever heard within the walls of Parliament. For three days an exposure of the means by which the employers had become capitalists, and the landholders had acquired and maintained their ownership, continued in an excited House, without a single member of the Ministry rising to take part in the debate.

The attack on the compensation proposals was based by the dissatisfied Phalanxists on two entirely different theoretical grounds. It was claimed that the fundamental principle of Collectivism, that of obligatory State service as a *sine qua non* of citizenship, was violated by any arrangement which permitted of the continued existence of an idle and endowed class. The avowed Republican sympathisers made no secret of their hostility to the concession to oligarchical elements in the existing constitutional régime which were involved in the ministerial proposal. The anti-monarchical party had in fact lost no opportunity since the general election of pressing forward their views both in and out of the House, and were vigorous in their demand that the hereditary principle should no longer be permitted to remain the basis of our governmental system. That their disciples remained a comparatively insignificant factor in the political problem, was explained chiefly by the immense access of popularity which accrued to the Crown from the refusal to assent to the late Ministry's Land Purchase

Bill, followed by the prompt recognition of the verdict of the constituencies which placed the existing Government in office. As a matter of fact, there was no period in which the monarchy stood better with the mass of the people than at the present juncture. The diversion of the public interest and attention to matters of social importance, as distinguished from political nostrums, made purely theoretical and doctrinaire attacks on the constitution less effective now than at any previous period within the memory of those living. But this did not prevent the Republican section, small as it was, from occupying a conspicuous position in the House. In its attacks on the ransom clause, it was necessarily able to use arguments which had the advantage of being theoretically unanswerable; and although the British public has usually proved itself to be impenetrable to any considerations of mere logic, the burden of proving the expediency of the ministerial proposals was materially increased by the unavoidable absence of abstract principle to justify them.

The most dangerous attack, however, on the clause came from the proletariat malcontents, and the debate in their hands assumed totally new features. It was not now a question of first principles and of theoretical sociology, or of the ornate style, the classical quotations, the elegantly balanced rhetoric, which had been wont to receive the honour of verbatim report in the servile party press after a so-called important debate. It was the wrongs, the horrors, the infamies of four centuries finding a voice, from the mouths of the living and the records of the past, to denounce the greed without limit, the remorseless cruelty, the tyranny, the meanness, the brutal and merciless degradation of man by his fellow-man, which were all summed up in the fatal words "land" and "capital." The history of the soil, its prosperity when open to the nation, its gradual despoliation by the titled brigands who converted its happy population into herds of slaves, the greedy enclosure of common lands, the savage game laws, the legalised harrying of the homeless vagrants who had been driven off the soil, the ini-

quitous shirking of their obligations and duties by the land-thieves, the extortion of ever-increasing rents without any fresh outlay on the land, the despotism exercised over the tenants, the numberless exasperating interferences with their use of the tenancy, the law of distraint, the inhuman depopulation of whole counties to make sheep-farms or wildernesses for deer-stalking, the brutalities and oppressions of the "ganger" system—all these were described and denounced by the victims who had actually suffered from them, who had been oppressed, starved, hounded from pillar to post, bullied and reviled by the very men whose interests were now under consideration. The history of capital came from white-haired veterans who had lived before the Factory Acts, slaved in the mills almost from the cradle, and seen women and children flogged at the spindles. They had been driven to live in dwellings filthier than styes, had toiled eighteen hours a day, had been poisoned in foul workshops, cheated at every turn by adulteration, swindled at the employers' truck-shops, and turned out to starve when a lull came in the capitalists' profits. Men who had escaped with their lives from over-loaded and over-insured sea-coffins rose to tell how wealthy shippers planned wholesale murder as part of their routine business.

The entirely novel conditions of the discussion, the presence and testimony of so many actual victims of the fatal developments of Individualism, the intense realism and desperate earnestness of the assailants of the system which had ground them to the very dust for the sake of a handful of plutocrats, and the burning sympathy of the bulk of the hearers with the speakers, produced an impression to which the oldest *habitué* of the House was a stranger. It came upon the listening Peers in the gallery with the force of a revelation.

For the first time these exalted persons—most of them very estimable and inoffensive gentlemen as individuals—saw their order as other men saw it, and recognised with startled distinctness the light in which it was regarded by the men whose infinite toil had produced their wealth and kept them in idle-

ness and unbridled luxury. For the first time, they grasped the fact that it was no question of "paid agitators," of "pot-house politicians," of "demagogues," or of "blackguard Radicals." It was the nation of workers come to their senses, alive to their hideous wrongs, awakened to their irresistable power, and resolute to sweep out of the way the parasites who had sucked the lifeblood out of them for a dozen generations. It was a force which could no more be opposed, obstructed, coaxed or defied than could the rising tide.

So tremendous an indictment of the interests on which the national prosperity had been asserted to rest had never before reached the public ear. The effect was seen not only in the apprehensive silence of the Peers, and in the almost incredible sale of the reported speeches throughout the country, but in a result of a wholly unexpected character which followed upon this scathing arraignment of the British "property" interests.

On the Monday afternoon which saw the commencement of the great debate, the Phalanx Cabinet represented, to the wealthy, a set of Anarchist brigands bent on the ruin of the country and on the plunder of the respectable classes for the benefit of the mob, a gang of perfectly ineffable scoundrels for whom hanging was too good. On the Thursday morning following, Ministers awoke to find themselves Conservative statesmen, imbued with a scrupulous regard for vested interests, and deserving of every possible support against the more uncompromising section of their followers. This at least was the light in which the "property" press (doubtless so advised) now affected to represent them.

The speeches in support of the amendment were now terminated, and in his reply the Premier defined briefly and simply the position taken up by his colleagues and himself. That in view of the historical aspect of the acquisition and accumulation of private property in land or capital, no moral claim to the continuance of such privileges existed, was conceded as a thing not admitting of discussion; and the argument of "legal

right" only meant that the plunderers had taken care to be lawmakers at the same time, and to secure by statute with the right hand what they stole with the left.

"But," said the speaker, "all this is not only true, but it was true twenty years ago. The workers held supreme power in their hands then as now*—what use did they make of it? None. How many members did you elect then," turning to the proletariat members, "to make the demand we make on your behalf to-day? Not one.† You even sent working-men representatives to this House who prided themselves on opposing everything of the sort. When we of the Phalanx, men of the so-called middle classes, started our campaign against private profit and its infinite evils, how many of you joined our ranks? I will tell you—less than a dozen. Down to this century our members were nearly all "men with black coats," and for years it was thrown in our teeth that the Trade-Unions would have none of us. We found our recruits amongst University men, clergymen, artists, teachers, clerks, shopmen—everywhere except amongst the artisans; and we obtained them for one reason—because we always expressed our belief in the expediency of a moderate compensation to expropriated interests when the intended transition should be effected. Those who thought so too, gave us their help; with their help we grew and multiplied; with their help we turned out the late Liberal Government; we and they maintained the same thing when we turned out our immediate predecessors. However unreasonable, needless, or unjust, compensation may appear to some of us, it is nevertheless certain that all the early successes which made our later ones possible were obtained on the understanding that compensation was part of our programme; and my colleagues feel with myself that as far as we are concerned it is not for us to depart from that understanding.

* Alluding to the Franchise Act of 1884.

† This referred, of course, to the Parliaments of 1885-6. Matters improved slightly when two Collectivists were returned to the Parliament of 1892.

"There is another view of this matter to which we attach the greatest importance. Circumstances have enabled this country to take the lead in a movement which must in a greater or less time become general amongst civilised communities. Whether that time shall be longer or shorter is of tremendous, of infinite consequence, to millions of our brothers across the seas; and the answer to that question depends, to an extent we can hardly estimate, on the decision we come to on the point raised by the amendment before us. Our remarkable success so far has been owing largely to the sympathy of classes other than the proletariat, and that sympathy would certainly have been less, perhaps absent, had not a considerate policy been an integral feature of our programme. We have every reason to believe that the same state of things exists with far greater intensity abroad, and that the violent and uncompromising attitude characterising the bulk of Collectivist agitation in various parts of the Continent has delayed recognition of its just claims to a very noteworthy extent. If, as we hope and expect, a solution is about to be found with us for most of the social problems of our day, the adoption of that solution amongst suffering populations in other lands will be accelerated or delayed just in proportion as we here set the example of a generous deference to natural and legitimate susceptibilities. The whole matter to us will be a very small one, but to other nationalities it may mean the postponement of all industrial reform for a generation.

"There is still another point which must not be lost sight of. We, who represent the workers of the nation, stand at this moment in a position of absolute and unlimited political power. But from the moment that power is used oppressively, used to push an advantage to extremes, used to carry out a policy which (however logical) cannot be prevented from appearing vindictive, used to punish individuals for what are plainly and inevitably the faults of a system—from that moment we shall be exposed to the danger which ever accompanies excess; the danger of a loophole for smouldering discontent, for the sense

of injustice, for the sympathy with the unmerited hardships of a class not individually a fraction worse or better than the rest of the community; the danger of making the very worst cause popular by dealing with it unfairly—in a word, the danger of Reaction. Reaction at whatever cost must be guarded against; and no sacrifice of abstract principle or conventional symmetry can be too great if it secures us the prestige of having carried out a stupendous social revolution safely, peacefully, and above all equitably.

"To those who object to our proposal as a violation of theoretical equality, we say simply that we do not deny it. It is unsystematic, illogical, a compromise of principle, if you will. But we never professed to have a perfect system, a position of pure logic, or a basis of rigid ethics. Our programme has been from the first an entirely practical one; we have never been theorists, doctrinaires, visionaries, or Utopists. Our business has been to get State Industrialism accepted in the best form we could, and as soon as we could. To succeed in that, we have had to do what every one must do in public affairs where a free country is concerned—that is to say, compromise. We have had to compromise all along, and we shall no doubt have to go on compromising. If this particular compromise is found later on to be unfair, onerous, prejudicial, or inexpedient, the fault will not be with us but with the conditions under which all real statesmanship must always work; and the remedy will always be at hand in the shape of the income-tax and transfer duties. That is a machinery which provides for everything.

"This in brief is our view of the question of compensation. We shall regret very much if a majority of this House takes a different one; but in such a case we propose to be guided by the decision of the country on the specific question, and that decision we shall at once invite."

No speaker on either side rose to follow the Premier, the Conservative members having been implored by their whips, almost with tears in their eyes, to hold their tongues; and the sitting, on a hint from the Speaker, was suspended for an hour,

during which the lobbies and committee rooms were the scene of feverishly excited discussions on the claims of Ministers to support.

The more practical of the objectors to compensation were soon found to be quite willing to concede the point *pro formâ*, when they had had time to recognise the potency of the weapon of graduated taxation to neutralise, sooner or later, any inequalities which might prove distinctly objectionable, or continue to arouse discontent or hostility. Others agreed that the various correlated problems interposed a bar to action which would probably have been insisted on, had the matter been a less complicated one; whilst the position of Ministers as personally committed to a policy of compensation was felt to call for generous consideration. The doctrinaire Republicans, numbering about seventy, alone remained unconvinced, and were solid in their expression of hostility to the whole principle of legalising inequalities of privilege for the benefit of the least useful and least deserving class still left (at large) in the community.

The Conservative minority had in the meantime been oscillating in agonies of uncertainty between the three courses of opposing Ministers, supporting them, or abstaining from the impending division. The more long-headed of the Peers had the preceding day openly avowed their conviction that the state of public opinion made any policy but that of voting for the Government simple madness. Several noble lords were known to have urged at the Carlton that neither landlords nor capitalists would ever again receive such an offer as was now open for their acceptance, and that the least hesitation on their part would take out of the hands of the Government any power to secure compensation at all. The incidents of the debate, and its reception in the country, had revealed so vast and so formidable an hostility to the property interest, that it was even now doubtful whether a present success of Ministers could be sustained sufficiently to carry their proposals into actual operation; and the only way of safety lay in strengthen-

ing their hands to the utmost. These views to the greater or lesser degree had spread rapidly through the Lower House; and as the time for the division approached, the Opposition whips were busy in direct support of Ministers amongst the disunited ranks of the Left.

When the Speaker resumed his seat, the throng that poured into the House seemed second only, if not equal, to the attendance on the Taxation Bill division, and the excitement was if possible greater. On the question being put, the Conservative party almost to a man was seen to cross over to the Government lobby, and a scene of enthusiasm followed without precedent in the House. Unusual delay occurred before the tellers came up to the table, but when the paper was handed to the Speaker the result of the division was found to be—

For the second reading	595
Against	72
Majority for the Bill ...	523

The minority was made up of five Independents, four Conservatives, and sixty-three Republican Phalanxists. Seven of this last section joined the rest of the House in walking into the right-hand lobby. Two members only were absent* (the cause being illness), and it may be mentioned that this appears to have been absolutely the last of the great historical divisions in the House of Commons. There is no record, in any subsequent division, of a muster roll even remotely approximating to that on the second reading of the National Property Bill.

The political aspect of the division was no less significant than its magnitude. It was a prophetic indication of the lines upon which the future party divisions of the nation were to be maintained. From this time, Conservatives, Liberals, and Radicals disappeared. Henceforward, while the occupants of

* The Speaker, of course, not voting. The largest division previously recorded was that of August 12th, 1892, when 660 members voted.

the Government benches were avowedly or tacitly Phalanxist, those of the Opposition were no longer Conservative but ultra-Republican.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHATEVER might have been the practical readiness with which the House agreed to the main proposals of Ministers, there was necessarily a wide diversity of opinion as to the way in which the compensation clause should be carried out, and the principles which should guide its operation. Into the history of these differences it is not proposed to enter, and it will be sufficient to mention that in the end the chief recommendations of the Government were adopted by the Grand Committee to which the rules for regulating compensation were referred. The only important modification was one intended to deal with property-owners whose sole interest lay in the possession of ground rents, and vacant town lands, acquired by actual purchase, and whose property under the test of value proposed by the Government (that of actual future value to the State) became by virtue of a Collectivist régime relatively worthless, while investors who had happened to place the same sum in buildings would receive an adequate *quid pro quo* for their interest. The basis of compensation in these and similar cases—mortgages of course sharing in the arrangement—was ten per cent. of the last sum actually paid, the remaining nine-tenths being deducted as an equivalent for the proportion of local taxation which had been evaded by means of the legislative action of these same land-owners in both Houses. This was a very liberal and generous concession under all the conditions, and one to which only the proposed limitation of compensation annuities (viz., to the life-time of the person interested, or twenty-one years after the Act, according to circumstances) could have reconciled the majority of the House of Commons.

Separate schedules of rules were drafted by the same Committee to regulate the operations of the new administrative boards, and the modes of their constitution and election. In these, as was not only expedient but indeed imperative, the utmost possible powers, consistent with a systematised working of the new régime, were accorded to the local governing bodies.

The duties of the most important new body, the Board of Mines and Manufactures, were probably those least permitting of decentralisation, inasmuch as considerations other than local ones would be found in many cases to be urgent. Amongst these might be the transfer of industries from one centre to another on grounds of greater economy, facility, or convenience. But as the well-being of individuals, under the new régime, would remain entirely unaffected by the presence or absence of special industries or commercial enterprises in their immediate neighbourhood, no dissatisfaction was expressed even by extreme opponents of centralisation at the somewhat extensive powers left with the new Board.

With the Agriculture and Recreation Boards it was otherwise. Subject to the head offices as courts of appeal, the Chambers of Agriculture were practically entrusted with the entire control of the industries connected with cultivation; while the Town Councils and their subdivisions were to deal with the providing of popular amusements. The latter function, however, in the cases of places of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, was left for the present with their respective County Councils, as there was reason to expect that a considerable amount of prejudice and inertness would delay or hamper the policy of the Recreation Board in secluded and backward localities, to the disadvantage of the more intelligent minority of their inhabitants. As a temporary measure it was left optional for local bodies which were rather new to these duties to delegate them, if they preferred, to their County Councils or the Board; but the providing of places of amusement was in the last resort made obligatory on the Recreation Board, whether its powers were delegated or otherwise.

In the same way the provision for education was obligatory on the Education Board (into which the old Committee of Council was now resolved), and that of hospitals, medical assistance, surgery, sanitation, vaccination, and the supply of drugs, on the Board of Health. The Central Boards were bound to supplement or carry out the duties of the local Education and Health Committees, if the latter were shown to be neglecting or refusing to fulfil them.

The imperial funds were of course to supply all the privileges promised to the citizens in the original Phalanx programme, viz., free education, facilities for research and culture, justice, transit and postal, &c., service, sanitation, medical aid, water, and recreation. The local governing bodies would retain as a matter of course their old powers to levy taxation* for the provision of supplementary advantages and conveniences for the benefit of the ratepayers, such as gas and electric lighting, the laying out of parks, public gardens, and promenades, the erection of baths, washhouses, public dining and assembly rooms, and the holding of fêtes, festivals, competitions of all kinds, and so forth.

The arrangements for the appointment of the paid Judiciary were left untouched, as they had always worked fairly well. But the local Councils were called upon to provide machinery for local public prosecutors, on the admirable plan so long in operation in Scotland (so far as their functions were not affected by the Civil and Criminal Procedure Act passed later in the session, and of which more hereafter). The expense of this was of course borne by the Treasury.

The police and sanitation departments were to remain matters of purely local administration, but paid for by the State. Control of the various grades of educational institutions was divided between the local School Boards, the County Councils, and the Education Board. The latter of course dealt directly with the so-called Public Schools, with the

* Details of the arrangements for collecting rents, local taxes, and recurring charges of a similar kind, will be found in a later chapter.

various Courts of Examiners in medicine, science, letters, and music, and with the Universities.

The great public services connected with the post, telegraphs, and telephones, and the transit arrangements all over the country, were to remain exclusively under the Board of Trade, which was to absorb the Post Office Department, and provide a Committee for Mercantile Marine.

Residential, shop, and warehouse property of all kinds was placed under the direction and control of the Board of Supply, with the necessary powers to convert one into the other, or into places of recreation, to demolish, construct, alter, or remove (on the American plan) at its discretion. Manufacturing premises, mines, and all the plant connected with both, devolved upon the Board of Mines and Manufactures, and the shipping property on the Board of Trade.

The foreign consular service was to be reorganised on the basis of intimate relation to the Board of Trade, which was charged with the whole import and export business of the nation. The chief function of the consuls for the future would be to continuously advise and report on the condition and nature of foreign demand for British manufactures. We may here anticipate matters so far as to say that nothing in the whole reorganisation of the British industrial system was attended by more success than the particular provision just indicated. For more than a generation the British consuls abroad had been periodically urging upon the manufacturers at home to consult more thoroughly and exactly the precise demands of the populations amongst which the consulates were situated, to recognise the frequent traditional adherence of native races to certain styles of make and qualities of material, and to imitate the goods that were popular and sought for amongst the natives rather than keep on making and sending out articles of purely British pattern, for half of which no real demand existed at all. The consuls had for years been reporting that agents of the principal French and German houses made a point of enquiring into the native habits and customs,

securing patterns of their own favourite fabrics, tools, and other products, and sending these to Europe to be copied. As a result, British goods of the old obstinately British type were everywhere neglected, while trade was passing into foreign hands. As soon as our national commerce passed under the new régime all this was changed. The invaluable services of our consuls were for the first time recognised and utilised, the system of consular reports was enormously extended, and within a very short time the export trade of this country to certain parts of Asia and Africa was practically revolutionised. Goods of types hitherto unknown were manufactured expressly to meet special local demands abroad, and an end was put as a matter of course to the mischievous system of speculative shipments of goods (for which neither actual or prospective demand existed) merely for financiering purposes and the profit of commission agents. As a result, the invariable success of really genuine British manufacture when directed into suitable channels became conspicuously manifest under the new conditions. We not only regained all our old ascendency, but practically extinguished Continental competition in many open markets. The almost unaccountable superiority of the British craftsman (unaccountable in view of his distinct deficiency both in the taste of his French rival and the better education of the German proletariat) in all branches of textile manufacture and metallurgical operations has remained not only unimpaired, but enhanced, down to the present day—surely a notable tribute to the blindness and incapacity of those leaders of British commerce who, under the old régime, permitted trade to pass into other hands in almost every quarter of the globe, while they had no better remedy to suggest for this state of things than a "protection" which, as a matter of fact, no British industry ever did or could require except against the almost ineffable stupidity and shortsightedness of the employers themselves.

It need hardly be said that the remarkable expansion of foreign export under a Collectivist régime, here by anticipation

referred to, formed no part whatever of the specific hopes or expectations of the Phalanx leaders. The latter knew perfectly well that the true prosperity of this country depended on conditions with which the amount of our foreign trade had absolutely nothing whatever to do. Those conditions, when secured, would permit of entire independence of any community outside our own borders for the essentials of a perfectly complete and successful national existence. Nevertheless, the immense increase in our exports was not without interest, as showing that the element of common sense infused into our social organisation not only produced all the advantages specially aimed at by the change, but others which had not been in any way sought for.

The coal and other mining industries (including salt), together with the stone, slate, lime, and marble quarries, came as before mentioned under the Board of Mines and Manufactures. The control of the fisheries, docks, and mercantile marine went to the Board of Trade, in association with the Chambers of Commerce of the principal seaports. The latter were already, through the operation of the great shipping syndicates and the various dock and harbour trusts, in possession of the necessary administrative machinery in a greater or lesser degree. The shipbuilding industries were of course placed under the Manufactures Board.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It will be perhaps expedient at this point to detail the provisions under which the various boards were to be constituted, partly for the reason that this was the point on which the croakers had been accustomed to base most of their prophecies of jobbery, of bureaucracy, of a centralised despotism, of incapacity, and of failure; and partly because the lapse of time has permitted of so many convenient departures from the

initial type of industrialist organisation, that many of the details which follow herewith are either obsolete or forgotten.

After the passing of the National Property Act the Board of Agriculture was to be reconstituted, and made to consist of members nominated in equal proportions by the Crown and the local Chambers of Agriculture connected with the Board. A third of the Board was to retire every year, and the Crown at each retirement of a third of the members would nominate a third of their successors. All members were eligible for reappointment. The County Chambers of Agriculture were to be reorganised on similar lines. Each Chamber was to consist of ninety members, of whom the Crown would appoint thirty, while those actually engaged as employés under the different local agricultural authorities would elect the rest. Thirty of the members would retire annually, of whose successors the Crown would appoint ten. It was intimated, in this connection, that the Crown would accept as its nominees such names as might be presented by the existing Chambers.

The constitution of the existing Board of Supply was somewhat modified in view of its assumption of control over the whole residential and shop property of the kingdom, actual and prospective. A "Building Council" was added to it of ninety members, of whom thirty were elected by the architectural profession and the remainder by the Building-Trades Unions; but the actual dealing with operations of construction and alteration were assigned primarily to a special "Construction Committee" of each borough and county council. These local committees were accorded the status of delegations of the Central Council, acting independently unless and until an appeal was lodged at the head office demanding inquiry into special cases of local action or want of action. Minor provisions dealt with applications from individuals to have houses constructed or altered to suit their special needs or

desires.* Arrangements were also made to meet the necessity of members of the building trades (including decorators and gardeners) moving from place to place (sometimes at a distance from their homes), as the exigencies of work demanded. Of the elected Council of the Supply Board, ten of the architects and twenty of the building trade members retired annually; but the original Crown nominees were as a matter of present convenience accorded a status of five years' membership until the press of reorganisation should be over.

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The electorates of the new local Chambers of Commerce at the seaports, to act in concert with the Board of Trade, were to consist of the fishermen, seamen, firemen, dock employés, and all employed in the navigation of the mercantile marine and the fishing industry, including oyster culture and dredging. The initial arrangements were to be similar to those already mentioned. Each Chamber was to consist of ninety members, of whom thirty were to be selected by the existing Chambers to sit as Crown nominees, the remaining sixty to be chosen by the electorate. The conditions of retirement were the same as above. Provision was made for the grouping of several small ports together to elect single Chambers, much as the parliamentary boroughs were grouped for representative purposes. The various Chambers were to nominate one member each to represent them on the Board of Trade, which would now consist of these elected members and of fifty Crown nominees.

In consequence of the complexity and variety of the functions of the Board of Trade, embracing questions of foreign purchase and supply of an intricate character, the expediency of giving the Crown a wider latitude of choice (in availing itself of the knowledge and experience of persons who might not be well-known to any local body of electors) was self-evident. It was therefore proposed for the present to

* The details of these arrangements will be found in a later chapter.

accord the fifty Crown nominees on the Board of Trade a status of five years' appointment, the whole of the elected representatives retiring annually.

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The constitution of the Board of Mines and Manufactures was to differ slightly from the above. Each local manufacturing centre was to be under the control of a Committee of ninety, of whom the Crown nominated thirty on the recommendation of the leading former owners and employers, the employés electing the rest (with the usual conditions of retirement). The organisation of groups and centres for purposes of representation had reference more to general conditions than technical ones, more especially for the settlement of details of work, difficulties of detail, and disputes between managers and those under their direction. These local Committees of Management had each one representative on the Central Board, but in addition the various Trade-Unions were represented independently by delegates who were elected annually. These two classes, with the Crown nominees to the number of thirty, constituted the Metropolitan Board.

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The Railway and Transport Board was to be reorganised on similar lines, but was to be a much smaller body. Nine of its twenty-seven members were to retire annually, but a third of its members were always to be Crown nominees, while the rest were to be elected directly by the employés on the different lines of communication of each kind. It was not considered that local representative bodies would answer any useful purpose, the various Unions supplying everything that was necessary in this connection. The local management of tram and omnibus lines was to be left to the various town and county councils, while the train, canal, and coasting services remained under the Board.

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The Board of Recreation consisted of thirty Crown nominees and sixty representatives of the Association of Musical and Dramatic Artistes, and the Theatrical Employés' Union; the conditions of retirement being the usual ones. The local management of matters appertaining to this department was to be left as much as possible to the local governing bodies as soon as the necessary structural accommodation throughout the country had been provided. The Chief Office of the Board would then become little more than a gigantic agency for providing the services of everything and everybody requisite for the amusement of the community. In the meantime the obligation was thrown upon it of furnishing accommodation for at least one-tenth of the whole adult population; and it was found later that this represented with considerable accuracy the average number of people who at any given moment sought recreation outside their own resources.

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The Board of Health was to consist of thirty members of the medical profession elected by the whole of their registered colleagues throughout the United Kingdom, and thirty medical men elected by the profession in the thirty largest towns; a third of each class retiring annually. The Board was to be called together twice a year (or oftener if occasion demanded) for the transaction of general consultative business; and was empowered to delegate its functions, between its meetings, to a standing Committee of seven which sat permanently at the London office of the Board. The Board as thus constituted assumed, with the approval of the whole profession, the examining functions of all the score or so of bodies previously empowered to grant diplomas; and, while taking no part in the work itself, presented lists of examiners to the Board of Education. In this way the ultra-conservative, obstructive, and almost mediæval attitude of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, which had been a standing source of inconvenience and annoyance to the whole of the medical

profession for at least two generations, was finally eliminated from the question of the status and the development of the healing art.* It is hardly necessary to say that in this reform the Ministry was not acting on its own initiative, but was carrying out what had long ago been known to be the express wish of the profession as a whole, and had in fact been formally communicated to the Cabinet through the agency of the Phalanx.

The manufacture and supplying of drugs was placed under the sole control of the Board, and was delegated by them to a committee appointed by the Pharmaceutical Society for the purpose. This department was authorised to buy accepted preparations as well as to carry on manufacture and preparation itself, subject to the necessary safeguards, and was required to meet all the requirements of the medical profession throughout the kingdom.

The local Committees of Health were to consist of all the registered practitioners in each locality, and County Boards were to be formed by single representatives from each local Committee. These local bodies were of course permanent, while the County Boards retired by thirds annually; and their functions were numerous and important. They had to provide all the medical service and attendance called for in each locality; to organise and maintain hospitals, sanatoria, and asylums for the incurable, insane, and dying;† to provide for food-analysis, sanitation, and inspection; to recommend measures of health to the town and county councils; and in default of their action, to complain to the Central Board.

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A sub-section of the Bill assigned the whole of the religious edifices in the country (including denominational

* The almost incredible ignorance of the more modern developments of medical science (notably that of experimental psychology), which characterised the two Colleges at this period, was not only a scandal to the profession but constituted a distinct danger to the public.

† The last a much needed institution.

schools) to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and provided for a considerable change in the constitution of that body. Half its members were to consist of representatives in equal numbers of the chief denominations, while the other half were nominated by the Crown, chiefly from amongst distinguished members of the legal profession. Pending the introduction of a more comprehensive and practical system of ecclesiastical tenure and administration (with which the Government had no present intention of charging itself), the existing occupancy and control of churches, chapels, and sectarian schools were left undisturbed, subject to adequate, suitable, and careful use of the structures. The Commissioners were directed and empowered to maintain all the fabrics in due repair, to permit or forbid structural alterations proposed by the congregations at the private expense of the latter, and to divert to other uses, if expedient, buildings which might be found or become insufficiently utilised. They were also empowered to erect new buildings of this character, on being approached with a sufficient subscription or guarantee from a proposed congregation or from a representative religious organisation. Any dispute as to the rights or claims of congregations, churchwardens, incumbents, or ministers was to be settled by the Legal Council of the Commission, which would include the *personnel* of the Court of Arches and such eminent lawyers as might be appointed for this purpose by the Crown.

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A supplementary Bill provided for the immediate election of the various Boards, the organisation of their respective departmental staffs, their assumption of office not later than the following 24th of June (on which day all such property as was not already formally taken over would become vested in the Crown), and the system of book-keeping, statistics, and financial statements of the several departments in connection with the Treasury. The financial year was arranged to ter-

minate on the 31st of December instead of April 5th as heretofore, and monthly statistical returns were to be published of the national industries and trades in all their branches. Finally, it was intimated that the rules, regulations, and orders of each Board were to have the force of law, as far as they affected its own department, until the 24th of June, 1906.

Such were the leading features of the National Property Bill and its schedules. It was not attempted to represent many of the proposed arrangements as other than temporary, and with regard to several it was evident that as soon as organisation was thoroughly effected their operation would be very little called for. But on the whole the proposals of the measure were recognised as giving the utmost scope to local self-government that was for the present practicable, without leading to needless confusion and delay in meeting the ordinary requirements of the public. It was at all events difficult to see, in the new departmental system, a trace of the centralised bureaucracy which had been so persistently prophesied as the inevitable accompaniment of State Industrialism.

The passage of the Bill through its later stages presented no features of interest; but the Republican Opposition renewed its objection to the principle of compensation on the occasion of the third reading, and took a division *pro formâ* in a small House, before the Bill was sent up to the Lords.

As the Conservative party in the Commons had voted in strict accordance with the recommendation of the guiding spirits in the Upper House, there was no pretence of organised opposition to the Bill amongst the Lords. But a small irreconcilable minority took divisions at all the stages; and nearly two-thirds of the Peers voted for a resolution which declared "That the House, while not opposing the change in the tenure of property demanded by the constituencies, could only

consider it of an experimental character, would hold that all vested interests were inalienable, and would reserve the right to revive them in their entirety when a suitable occasion presented itself."

With the bestowal of this piece of their minds, not more ungraciously than might have been expected under the circumstances, the Lords washed their hands of the Bill, and sent it up for the Royal Assent.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IMMEDIATELY after the second reading of the Property Bill in the Commons, Ministers addressed to the House a statement of the general steps by which it was proposed to antecede the complete introduction of the State Industrialist system on the following Midsummer Day.

The various manufacturing concerns would be taken over individually as fast as the necessary arrangements could be made by the new Board; and intimations were invited from the managing principals and directors as to their willingness to continue in management, should their services be required. It was evident that the cessation of the old trade conditions, and the closing or concentrating of innumerable minor concerns, would permit of and involve a considerable reduction of administrative staff, not only in manufactories but in every branch of retail business trade. As regards the whole class of clerks whose work was of a mechanical character (whether engaged in houses of business, brokers', lawyers', or agents' offices, banks, factories or otherwise), there would be only a comparatively small number of these whose services would be called for in the same capacity after the reorganisation. It was intimated that these would be selected (subject to their willingness) from amongst the men over forty years of age, as it was considered that the younger clerks could adapt them-

selves with greater readiness to other occupations. Of the most experienced commercial travellers and trade buyers, a certain number for each department of purchase and supply would necessarily be required by the Boards of Trade and of Manufactures. The rest, with the superfluous clerks, would be required to volunteer for service of a different character under the guidance of the Central Labour Bureau. This department of the Board of Trade would supply information as to the demand for skilled and unskilled labour of every class, and would be the agency through which all the Boards and Departments would obtain their employés. The opinion was incidentally expressed that all probabilities pointed to an immensely increased demand for the various kinds of labour connected with building construction; while the expected total withdrawal of female workers from various crafts and manufactures would involve at least an equivalent substitution of male labour, with every likelihood of a considerable increase in the total.

It was further announced that the Treasury would meet any expenses of training classes, technical schools, workshops, or institutes which might be established by the borough or county Councils to meet the difficulties of a transfer of occupation, and would allow of full credits to the adult students therein until they were drafted into their respective trades.

The scheme by which ultimately the organised industry of the nation would be given a military form was promised as early as possible after the impending transition was in working order. In the meantime the prevailing arrangements would be maintained, with no material alteration, through the agency of the local and central Boards.

Ministers then laid upon the table the Crown nominations to the various Boards, and announced the date (four weeks later) on or before which the elective members were to be chosen by the various constituent bodies charged with their selection. The ordinary registration machinery was at once employed to prepare the lists of the several consti-

tuencies created by the Bill. The Crown nominees consisted as before mentioned, of employers of labour and scientific experts in the different trades and industries, who had long before been selected through the agency of the Phalanx and the private reports of the various Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce. Associated with these were the most experienced leaders of the import and the export mercantile community who were willing to accept the duties of the posts offered them.

Although the Council of the Phalanx had for some time previously used every exertion to anticipate the preparations called for by the announcements just detailed, and thereby to facilitate the working of the arrangements for industrial reorganisation, it still happened that an immense amount of work in this direction required the stimulus of actual imminence to secure its being completely and universally undertaken. Concurrently with the Ministerial statement the Council of the Phalanx issued an address to the employers and employed, indicating the programme rendered expedient by the situation of the hour. Amongst other suggestions the employés of every trade were urged to join the Union of that particular branch of industry without exception or delay, both for the protection of their own interests, and for the provision of a complete electorate in every industrial section. The employers of labour, owners or managing directors of mines, manufactories, and industries carried on by public companies, were recommended at once to form themselves into syndicates (with a view to examining the circumstances of each of the branches of industry with which they were connected), and to report to each Board (when formed) on the steps necessary to concentrate operations, to economise staff, premises, plant, and processes, and to introduce improvements into their working.

The employés were called upon to instruct their nominees fully upon all questions concerning the health and safety of

the workers in all industries, the features in their occupations demanding alteration or improvement, and the opportunities for substituting mechanical appliances in place of hand labour which might hitherto have been neglected.

Finally, the magnitude of the interests at stake, the number and complexity of the points calling for adjustment, the imperative necessity for the selection of the most capable, experienced, and trustworthy representatives of the interests concerned, and the advisability of sinking all personalities, jealousies, and prejudices under circumstances of such vital import to our national prosperity and prestige, were vigorously urged upon the new constituencies and upon the nation at large.

A month of unparalleled activity followed the Ministerial statement. The impending elections of the local and national Boards led to an almost complete absorption in the various Unions of the comparatively few persons, connected with each pursuit, who had not already joined its representative organisation. Meetings were held almost nightly to discuss candidates and form committees; while the question of the grouping and consolidation of the various producing concerns involved still more assiduous consultation. As regards the latter point, unanimity of opinion was scarcely to be expected, and in many cases alternative reports and recommendations were drawn up by the syndicates to an inconvenient extent. But a Treasury minute, to the effect that all profits of private concerns accruing after the passing of the National Property Bill would be rigorously claimed by the Exchequer, did a good deal to suppress a policy on the part of proprietors of delaying a systematic resettlement of the machinery of production to the last minute. Much valuable information was obtained by this preliminary discussion, and as the divergences between the various suggested arrangements turned upon matters of unimportant detail, rather than of principle, the problems left

for settlement by the National Boards presented no real difficulty. The greater interests (such as the cotton, linen, wool, jute, and silk manufactures, the iron and other metal industries, the shipbuilding trades, the mines, and the potteries) were naturally the easiest to deal with, and this considerably simplified the position of the Government in its impending assumption of the functions of a foreign trader.

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It may readily be understood that great doubt had been entertained as to how far, under the impending reorganisation of the national industry, those hitherto concerned in its management, whether as independent employers or representatives of proprietary bodies, would remain available for the public service. Many would be entitled by age to retire into the list of pensionaries, apart from the probability that the greater number would be claimants for compensation to an extent sufficient to render them independent (in the old-fashioned sense of the term). Others might be expected to decline a responsibility from which they were no longer to derive any pecuniary advantage in the slightest degree. It could hardly be doubted that the withdrawal of the privileges of capital and proprietorship, in the shape both of large incomes and of the social status attaching thereto, would in many cases lead to a complete cessation of interest in pursuits which had only been valued for their profits. It might also involve a resentment against the Collectivist régime sufficiently vigorous to suggest that obstruction, rather than assistance, might be looked for.

To say that these anticipations were entirely disappointed would fall a good deal short of historical accuracy. But the constitution of the new Boards showed very clearly that, for the present at all events, no inconvenience was likely to arise from the absence of competent direction. The Crown nominees included quite a notable proportion of the leaders of trade and manufacture, and of technical experts in all branches of industry; while the Trade-Union members more than sup-

plied what was necessary of direct personal experience with the technique of the workers. As regards the employers and managers generally, the habits of a lifetime of control proved no doubt in many cases too strong to be changed in a moment. To some, the prestige of a seat on the National Board appeared at least preferable to no prestige at all. Others honestly desired to assist in making the best of what they openly or secretly considered to be a desperately bad job, and were determined to "see the country through," if such a thing were possible. The considerations that applied to the National Boards applied with almost equal force to the local Chambers and Committees. Events proved that a difficulty in finding suitable candidates would be little if at all felt in the elections. This was no doubt owing largely to the absorbing public interest in the novel procedure, the difficulty of bringing any improper influence to bear on the voters, the palpable advantages of a decision based on merit alone, the absence of any practical purpose to be served by a corrupt selection, and the futility of obstructing the new movement by any sidewind policy or hole-and-corner tactics. All this led to a more general exhibition of common sense on the part of the various sections of the electorate than could have been looked for by the most sanguine Collectivist; and it is doubtful if any administrative bodies were ever brought together more thoroughly qualified to deal with the business before them than the Boards and Chambers constituted under the National Property Act in March 1905.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE National Boards were now ready to receive and deal with the reports of the borough and county Councils invited by the Government during the previous autumn, and the greatest despatch was observed in acting upon them. As fast as the

various recommendations reached the Board of Supply they were examined and (if approved) passed. Operations to carry them into effect were commenced, and the concentration of the various channels of retail supply carried on unceasingly till complete. The innumerable small shops and stores requiring to be closed under the new régime were first dealt with, their stocks carefully checked, credited to the proprietors, and removed to the premises selected for the State Stores.

The services of most of the employés were retained while matters got into train, unless they preferred to volunteer into producing trades, which was the case with thousands who were sick of the monotony of standing behind a counter all their days. It was felt to be better at starting to be over rather than undermanned; but it was evident from the first that an enormous surplus of distributors would eventually be free to perform more useful services to the community. Of the houses licensed for the sale of liquor, scarcely a vestige seemed to remain. In reality the number left was ample for all the public requirements; but, compared with the incredible excess of these social pests formerly so conspicuously in evidence, they had now almost disappeared. The principle was adopted from the outset of providing intoxicants for sale at all restaurants and dining-rooms, places of amusement, &c., while in no case was any place for the sale of intoxicants alone sanctioned by the Board of Supply. The old drinking dens and gin-palaces were extinguished for ever, their places being taken by general refreshment-rooms and cafés, as distinguished from rooms where more solid and formal meals were supplied. The local authorities were instructed to provide (at the requisition of one-third of the inhabitants) separate accommodation at hotels and at eating-houses for total abstainers. But of this concession (loudly demanded in the first place by the more energetic section of the temperance party, and conceded at once by the Government) very little advantage was taken, and except in a few small communities it remained an absolutely dead letter.

The truth was that the need for the arrangement in question had passed away. A revolution had taken place in the drinking habits of the nation, almost without its being noticed. The frightful excesses of habitual indulgence, which had once been the despair of social reformers, were now practically unknown. The drinking classes had undergone so many important experiences, both in way of losses and gains, that their old habits had become modified beyond recognition. The Vagrant Act, the "nuisance" clauses of the Drink Traffic Act, and the State-credit system, were of course in a measure responsible for this. But the fact that the millions of State employés, besides being unable to purchase drink except at the State Stores, were accorded such advantages as unlimited recreation and free transit, accounted very fully for the remarkable improvement in the *morale* and physique of the proletariat which was now so constantly a subject of observation.

Indeed, it may be said that the very first year of a Collectivist régime disposed of the two most persistent of the platitudes indulged in by the croakers and canters of a society reeking with propertyism—the first, that people could not be made sober by Act of Parliament; the second, that prostitution, drunkenness, and crime could never be got rid of while human nature remained what it was and had been from time immemorial.

From the 25th of March all rents were payable to the Treasury through the Board of Supply, acting through the Inland Revenue authorities of each district. Pending the revaluation of the national property for rental purposes (an undertaking which could not be commenced till the arrangements for State Stores, &c., were completed), occupiers of private houses were only called upon to pay one quarter of the previous rent of their tenements. Arrangements were made by which sworn statements of claims for compensation, backed by suitable expert evidence, were permitted to be handed in to excuse payment of rent, if the margin appeared to the local Com-

missioners of Taxes to be adequate. In this manner, the inconvenience that would otherwise have been caused to occupiers of very expensively rented houses were obviated. Most of these were of course in a position to claim compensation on some ground or other, and it would have been a distinct hardship to disturb their tenancy until their account with the State had been settled. In the meantime, the rent otherwise payable was debited to them, and the same course was followed with any credit allowance accorded on their own behalf or that of their families.

By the end of April all the staple industries of the kingdom, except agriculture and shipbuilding, had passed under the control of the Board of Mines and Manufactures. During May the last of the retail shops which were not taken over for State Stores were cleared out, and the final arrangements, as far as immediate requirements were concerned, were found to be practically completed for the supply of everything in ordinary demand. To meet the public convenience, telephone offices in connection with all the State Stores were multiplied in profusion, so that householders in the towns had in no case more than a few yards to walk to be in communication with the Stores of their district. In villages and country places the telephones were connected with the nearest town. As delivery of goods and transit for passengers were of course both free, purchasers everywhere had the option of sending their orders or of making personal selections without any expense, wherever their place of abode might be.

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It is not necessary to describe in detail the history of the arrangements by which the assignment of industrial management to the authorities constituted by the National Property Act was carried out. Comparatively few changes were made at this stage of matters by the provincial Boards or Chambers either in the management or conduct of the manufacturing and mining concerns, where the existing staff were satisfied to

remain. It need not be pointed out that the various sources of friction formerly arising so frequently between employers and employed, to the enormous loss and inconvenience of both parties, were from henceforth necessarily absent. The Trade-Unions were now practically the rulers of the national industry, and had not the slightest object to gain by checking production or hampering its processes; whilst the very *esprit de corps*, which had formerly been a weapon by which the worker should be defended against the master, was now by mere force of circumstances alone turned against the defaulting members of the Unions themselves. The skulkers, shirkers, idlers, and inefficient were not now injuring the employers (which was held to be rather a virtue in the old days), but their fellow-workers; and this was resented promptly and sometimes unpleasantly by the immense bulk of the respectable craftsmen. A flood of light had been poured upon the half-awakened intelligence of the proletariat by the rapid and gigantic developments of Collectivism within the last two years. The removal of the mistaken and mischievous rule of their former Individualist leaders produced an effect in their ranks similar to that which follows the turning over of a big stone in a pasture. A host of unsightly reptiles and vermin were startled into sudden flight and disappearance; while a wholesome vegetation, long crushed and impotent, sprang up and flourished luxuriantly in the sun of a freer and healthier régime. A notable change in public opinion spread with rapidity amongst the whole artisan class. Now that a legitimate pride could be felt in their status in the body politic, the old instinct of "noblesse oblige," which has never been absent from any fairly-treated section of Englishmen, operated very generally to brand the loafer and duffer as a nuisance and a disgrace to his Union and his fellow Unionists.

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Incidentally, a new and effective stimulus was given to individual industry and regularity of work by a scheme of prizes

put forward by the Marine Committee of the Board of Trade. Immediately after the election of the National Boards, it was announced that in each branch of staple production the three separate workshops, mills, factories, mines, or what not, which showed the highest average of production (relatively to their numbers and resources) would be offered, for the four weeks' vacation to which all State employés were entitled (irrespective of the usual public holidays), a free trip to Norway or the Mediterranean in one of the national steamers fitted up for the purpose. In each similar group of employés, the same privilege would be extended to the one in each twenty elected by his fellows as the most regular and industrious State servant amongst them. Arrangements were of course made by which extra passages could be secured for friends or relatives at almost nominal rates, with the usual tariff for meals or board.

This system of reward, besides being one of the best available substitutes for the abandoned stimulus of extra wages or bonus for special industry, had the advantage of costing the State very little; while it opened up an unprecedented and hitherto impossible source of pleasure to the employés. The numerous wholly or partially unused steamers belonging to the mercantile marine, in addition to the troopships, were to be utilised in carrying out the arrangement. A check was thus to be placed on the rapid deterioration always going on in the fittings and machinery of this kind of craft when not actually under navigation. The provisioning of the holiday-makers of course cost no more afloat than ashore. The commissariat was conducted on liberal lines, while the extra passengers ate and paid for just what they chose. An indirect service to the Statistical Department of the government service was also rendered, by the estimate of maximum production which was made possible by the returns of the successful competing industrial groups.

It need scarcely be said that long before the arrival of the 24th of June many immense business interests had altogether

ceased to exist. Most of the private and joint-stock banks closed their accounts in May. The Bank of England (now a State Department of the Treasury) took over all the financial operations which survived the extinction of private commerce, including dealing with the interest on foreign stocks, bonds, &c., and the payment to aliens of the interest due on British Consols and other obligations. The sharebrokers became extinct in March, and the London Stock Exchange was closed early in April.

So considerable a proportion of the population had already come under the State-credit system that the abolition of currency on Midsummer Day, 1905, was an event almost unnoticed by the community generally; while the actual passing away of the Individualist system had been so thoroughly discounted by its partial previous cessation, that the legal transition to Collectivism attracted comparatively little public attention. All, or nearly all, the details which constituted the industrial revolution had been already in operation, and the mere technical closing of the old régime presented nothing of significance to the masses.

Nevertheless the actual date of the nominal transition was a subject of widespread interest in other countries, and a profound and lasting impression was produced by the simple and to a certain extent commonplace manner in which the United Kingdom had cut itself adrift from the traditions to which the rest of the civilised world still adhered. From the ever-memorable 24th of June, 1905, Great Britain was accorded in both hemispheres the undisputed leadership of the race. It had solved the problem of ages, and entered upon a career of which no man could even imagine the close. It had left all contemporary nations so far behind in its social evolution that they seemed mediæval by comparison. The differences between Russia and France, between Turkey and the United States, were reduced to nothingness by the interval which separated them all from the land which had inaugurated State Industrialism.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHILE the country at large was concerning itself with the machinery called into being by the Property Act, the Legislature had passed on to the consideration of proposals dealing with the education question.

Nothing connected with the Revolution involved so much necessity for tact and compromise as the details by which universal State Education was to be substituted for the innumerable private, semi-private, public, and national institutions which had hitherto provided for the training of the youth of both sexes. Great as had been the advance in public opinion since the passing of the Forster Act, there still remained on the part of the so-called middle and upper classes an insuperable hostility to the idea of promiscuous throwing together of all classes of pupils in compulsory free schools. This was intensified, as was only natural, in the case of the parents of girls. Apart from more or less reasonable class prejudices there existed a very obvious, proper, and indeed inevitable objection to the exposure of well-bred children to the distinct risk of examples not only of bad morals but of vile manners—the latter being to many people the greater evil of the two. Although it was quite possible that the ill-bred youngsters of the community would be deprived of their best chance of improving their language and address by being withheld from intercourse with the more refined, nevertheless it could hardly be expected that the parents of the latter would sanction their being utilised as part of the polishing machinery for the lower grades of society.

It was therefore deemed expedient by the Committee of Council to propose two temporary measures. Firstly, to accept all large private schools which met the absolute requirements of the Department and affiliate them with the Board schools for administrative purposes while preserving their distinctive character; each one to be under a committee of

parents, whose functions included that of admitting or refusing at their discretion pupils proposing to enter. Secondly, local committees were recommended to be formed, empowered to select a quorum of pupils sufficient to fill a Board school of average size, which should be assigned exclusively to the nominees of that committee; the contingency of having to divide the accommodation amongst two or more committees being provided for.

It was intended by means of this arrangement to enable parents who considered themselves to belong to any given social rank or grade of culture to act together, and to secure their families being brought into contact (during childhood and early youth at all events) with children of the same presumed status only. As the accommodation of all the Board schools and the class of education was intended to be precisely alike for all, not the slightest real disadvantage or inconvenience attended the above principle of selecting the pupils who should assemble at a particular building, or in particular rooms. The concession involved therein to the fetish of caste distinctions (a concession of course violently opposed by the doctrinaire Republican Opposition members—most of them University men and the younger sons of peers) smoothed the way to a general acceptance of the principle of universal State Education in a degree which would have been difficult, if not impossible, under any other conditions. It is hardly necessary to say that these various compromises and concessions had reference to difficulties attaching solely to the elementary schools. When pupils of all grades were ready for the secondary schools, and later for the various Colleges in which the higher aspects of University training were dealt with, the question of selecting the associations of students would no more come up for consideration than it did under the late régime, when boys obtained entrance at Eton, Harrow, and the other first-class public schools (to say nothing of the Universities) on the sole footing of being able to pay the fees demanded.

The curriculum suggested for working out in its details by the Education Board (with whose constitution, as a mere reorganisation of the old Committee of Council, it had not been considered expedient as yet to interfere) involved the assignment of the greater portion of the last year of the pupillary term of male students to the technical training considered likely to be most useful to particular boys in view of their probable avocations. All the trades were to be taught in detail, with the necessary qualification as regards mining operations; and in connection with each trade the fullest scientific training was to be given in all matters bearing upon it. Every student without exception would be compelled to learn at least one handicraft in addition to his proposed choice of an avocation, and all without exception (unless exempt by medical advice) had to attend military drill. Boys aspiring to the medical profession, or the pursuit of experimental science, would be allowed to give proofs of their special aptitude by examination. If successful, they were to be drafted into the purely scientific sections of the Colleges for three further years, at the conclusion of which time, unless quite distinctive ability was evident, they were to be relegated back to the ranks of the ordinary workers. If the medical students showed unmistakable aptitude at twenty-one years of age, their future professional training would be provided for at the hospitals as usual. The scientific students would be attached to the administration of their own or other Colleges.

In the girls' colleges the laws of physiology and health, cookery, and first aid in cases of accident or injury were to be a *sine qua non* during the last two years of their course, and gymnastic training was to take the place of the drill obligatory on male students. The arrangements for medical study and science were the same as for boys.

Into the details of the scheme by which the whole country was mapped out into centres for the primary, secondary, and collegiate schools we need not here enter, as with a few modifications the arrangements made have descended to the pre-

sent day; and with the proposed establishment of boarding halls for pupils collected from areas of population too scattered to permit of all the grades of education being afforded on the spot, the educational programme of the Government ended.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the affiliation of efficient private schools and the "committee" system disposed finally of all the difficulties arising from sectarian religious differences. The various denominations, Protestant or Catholic, could now easily secure separate accommodation and staffs for their different communions; and the principle was conceded from the outset that the committees should present suitable teachers and managers for acceptance by the Education Board, subject to the sole condition of efficiency. The nett result was the virtual endowment of all sects desiring that status, while the advocates of non-sectarian or secular education were placed in an exactly equivalent position.

It is true that, in some small communities, even the subdivision of the school buildings was scarcely sufficient to meet the demands for separated classes and sections. But these difficulties were in themselves trifling, and the slightly greater cost of the arrangements in question (as compared with the theoretical requirement of universal "secular" education) was repaid a hundred times over by the advantage of a prompt, effective, and permanent settlement of one of the most irritating and mischievous controversies of modern times. Theology and modern history were eliminated from the compulsory programmes of all Degree Examinations connected with education and science, and were left as optional subjects for those desiring to graduate in them through examiners of their own communion. This disposed of all practical difficulties in connection with the assignment of University honours and the resulting diplomas.

A very short experience of the "all-round endowment" system made it clear (as might have been confidently ex-

pected) that scarcely any advantage would be taken, except by the Roman Catholics, of the facilities afforded for separate sectarian education. The whole question had been so largely a matter of jealousy, religious animosity, and political wire-pulling, that as soon as perfect equality of privilege was conceded to all denominations to introduce as much or as little as they chose of what they called "religious education" into their curriculum, they ceased to have the desire to introduce any at all. In half a dozen years after the Revolution the children of Anglicans and Nonconformists mingled together at ninety per cent. of all the educational institutions of the kingdom. The Catholics preferred, as they had always done, to send their children to Catholic schools. But even in their case an increasing degree of indifference very soon began to manifest itself, and at the present day it is probable that only a small proportion of them are educated at exclusively Romanist institutions, the rest frequenting the non-sectarian State schools under the all-sufficient protection of the conscience-clause.

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While we need not refer to the share accorded to the various educational institutions in preparing the younger citizens for the career of the army and the navy, it may be convenient, in passing, to deal with the subject of the position of the military and naval services under the new régime.

Regulations were carried into effect as soon as the education arrangements had been disposed of, which did all that was at this time necessary to connect the services with the Co-operative Commonwealth now established. As regards their organisation little of course required to be touched, and as a matter of fact they represented in some of their features a distinct anticipation of the principles of Collectivism, the State dock-yards, factories, engineering works, &c., being amongst the very earliest examples of the national employment of labour for productive purposes. As regards pay, some modi-

fications were necessarily called for. Outside the country the pay of men and officers was made in specie for obvious reasons, but the actual sum was the same per head from the private soldier or man-o'war's-man up to the highest officer in rank, and stood at fourteen shillings per week. In addition to this pay (together with the food, lodging, uniforms, medical attendance, &c., which were provided free) liberal allowances were made for expenses to each grade of officer, according to demands likely to be made upon them in connection with their duties and position. The members of their families were of course all separately provided for under the credit system at home.

All pensions and routine stoppage were now abolished as unnecessary under the credit regulations, and the services were placed in the enjoyment of all the privileges of civilians where practicable. Outfit was under certain conditions, provided free for all branches of both the army and navy. The arrangements in regard to regiments quartered at home, and to the crews of ships-of-war in ports of the United Kingdom, were varied in accordance with circumstances. The general idea was to make no money allowance where the State-credit system was applicable. Elsewhere, cash pay was limited to necessary expenses out of pocket for the officers, and to the above mentioned sum of fourteen shillings per week in addition per head all round.

Practically the same arrangements were made with the various classes of employés in the mercantile marine, and the only change of any importance in this branch of the imperial service was the highly popular introduction of a dress and undress uniform for all grades. We may in this connection anticipate later developments so far as to say that concurrently with the assumption by the State of the administration of the shipping industries, a radical reform was made in the accommodation for sailors, firemen, and all concerned in the navigation of every kind of craft, both as regards living-room and food. Within twelve months the whole of

the trading and carrying vessels which were too small to permit of perfectly comfortable accommodation for their crews were swept out of the service. The more shapely and handy were refitted as pleasure boats to be hired out at the watering places and ports. The rest were sold abroad, broken up, or run on shore as relics to delight the younger generation ; and the mercantile marine was confined to what were, compared with their predecessors, floating palaces. The horrors of life on board the fishing fleets of this country, the colliers, and the small cargo boats, and the constant exposure to cold, wet, and exhausting toil in the mere cockleshells of smacks and trawlers, all came to an end, and the fisherman's work was carried on in large and splendidly appointed fishing steamers with the accommodation of Atlantic liners. The trawler, coble, barge, nickey, and "flat" survived only on the canvases of marine painters, and in the memory of superannuated "salts."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE mention of the marine painter suggests reference to the regulations adopted by the Board of Trade to deal with the somewhat exceptional case of the artistic fraternity in connection with the industrial system. It was obvious that with the art world, as with members of the medical profession, no routine details of occupation could be suggested, much less insisted upon, nor was it in the least possible to devise means whereby the amount or worth of an artist's work per annum could be brought under any scheme of valuation. On the other hand, those who had the slightest appreciation of what was absolutely essential for the raising of the intellectual tone of the whole community recognised the almost infinite importance of encouraging, to the very utmost extent, the de-

velopment of the national art, and the popular sympathy with its methods of expression. Next to the author, the artist rivalled the musician and actor as civiliser, refiner, and elevator of the race. No policy would have been less suited to the genius of Collectivism than a neglect to furnish the widest opportunities, and the amplest facilities, for the triumphs of the brush, the chisel, and the graver.

It may be safely said that, down to the period under discussion, scarcely any class had suffered so fatally from the curse of Individualism as that concerned in the production of works of art. To all but a mere handful of artists, professional success depended on the accident of being patronised by a wealthy collector, on fighting, intriguing, or toadying for admission into one or more of the "close" societies, on being "farmed" by an influential dealer, on manufacturing continuously identical subjects and effects for "the trade," or on pandering to the vanity of women and parvenues as a fashionable portrait painter. A very limited amount of picture-buying by municipalities for public galleries—probably a five-hundredth part of the sum similarly expended in France—was certainly carried on. But this was wholly controlled by small cliques of ignorant connoisseurs and prejudiced patrons, whose blunders, jobbery, and favouritism were more injurious to art than total neglect would have been. Sculpture scarcely existed save in the shape of portrait busts, and the only branch of art really popularised (because supported by the whole community and not by a few plutocrats) was that of engraving and etching. An artist's only mode of access to the public was through the grotesquely inadequate medium of half-a-dozen fashionable exhibitions in London, the property of certain self-elected members. The list of one set of these artist proprietors frequently coincided to a large extent with that of the others; while their whole aim was to make these concerns paying shops for themselves and their friends, and to direct the stream of art patronage, as far as possible, into their own galleries. The great dealers, making the larger portion of their profits out

of single transactions at inflated prices, strained every nerve to keep down the number of the artists in whose works they found it convenient to traffic. This was for the all-sufficient reason that they had to depend upon the bribe of a paying investment to induce their plutocrat customers to buy, and were consequently obliged, for their own safety, to see that the works they sold did not fall in value at the sales of the leading art-auctioneers of the day. They therefore had a direct interest in having as few fancy reputations to bolster up as possible. In the meantime the Government Schools of Art (originally founded to enable artisan craftsmen, by means of of an artistic training, to compete under fewer disadvantages with their French rivals) had been used almost solely by young amateurs of the middle classes, who flooded the market with their studies of still life, draped studio models, and landscapes in imitation of third-rate Continental artists.

To take advantage of the new régime, even in the midst of graver cares, to provide a remedy for this discreditable state of things was one of the first concerns of the Phalanxist Government; and after consultation with a large number of the more cultured members of the artistic profession the following provisional arrangements were made by the Department of Science and Art.

A body called the National Council of Arts was formed by the election of five representatives from each of the following bodies; the Royal Academies of London, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales,* the Royal Society of Water Colours, the Royal Institute of Water Colours, the Royal Society of British Artists, and the Society of Painter-Etchers. This Council of forty (to be elected annually†) was to grant diplomas to all members of their several societies, to all exhibitors (other than

* Known as the Scottish, Hibernian, and Cambrian, in the case of the three latter.

† To prevent the membership crystallising into a routine clique, it was provided that no representative could be elected two years running, unless as a member of another electorate—an R.A., for instance, as an R.I., if he happened to be both.

members) for three years at their several exhibitions, and to all such other persons as in their judgment deserved to rank as qualified professional artists. The basis for this judgment was to be a set of twelve pictures (guaranteed to be solely the work of the candidate) submitted to the Council, at an exhibition of such works to be held twice yearly in London. The possession of the diploma relieved the holders from the obligation to industrial service, and entitled them to full credit allowance, on condition that the normal hours of work should be devoted to the following of his avocation for the exclusive benefit of the State. The pictures, statues, etchings, decorative work, &c., thus produced were to be distributed amongst the public galleries of the nation by a system of periodical exchange.

It was of course objected at the time that this arrangement left a great deal too much to the caprice, crotchets, or idleness of individual artists, that it made no provision for securing an adequate or equal return to the State for the incomes it assigned, and that it was in fact nothing but a scheme for subsidising an army of æsthetic loafers. But no other satisfactory arrangement was possible. To leave art and artists to the caprice and ignorance of private or municipal customers (the latter being simply cliques of the former, with other people's money to spend) would have been to perpetrate all the evils which had done so much to degrade and destroy British art. To stipulate for such and such a number, quality, or area of art works to be contributed per head per annum was in the nature of the case impracticable. To enforce any routine of labour would be fatal. A great historical work for a public gallery might require at least a year's previous preparation of preliminary studies, rough and finished sketches, experimental groupings, &c., before the final canvas could be touched at all; travel and archæological research might occupy weeks without any outward trace of result to show for it; or half of the earlier design might be abandoned in favour of more promising modifications. All this no outsider could judge of, estimate, influence or control in the slightest degree.

As a matter of direct subsequent experience, all these objections were found, as might have been expected, to be baseless in actual practice; while the advantages of the new arrangements, and the results arising from them, were of incalculable service to the art of the nation.

A stimulus, hitherto unknown and impossible, was afforded to the development of individual aptitude and genius when the destructive coercion of market demand, fads of fashion, and dealers' insistance on mere manufactures, no longer compelled men to paint, not what they liked, but what they could sell. Artists could now abandon the production of toy pictures, mere knicknacks of art and adjuncts to upholstery, and devote themselves to works of gallery dimensions if their qualifications suggested such a course. Originality, hitherto systematically stamped out by the dealers as being confusing to their customers (who could only understand what they were accustomed to), now for the first time had full play. The opportunity for publicity, which had become every year more and more difficult, if not impossible, to those outside the ruling cliques of exhibitions, was now open to all with absolute equality. The fame usually so dear to all engaged in the practice of art was brought within the reach of everyone who could legitimately aspire to it.

The indirect results of the emancipation of art from Individualist trammels, important as they eventually became, can only be briefly touched on here. One of the most conspicuous social changes effected by the inauguration of Collectivism being the equality of income and the publicity attendant thereon, the old motives for vulgar ostentation in furniture, apparel, hospitality, &c., and the reliance on mere cost to impress the beholder, ceased to exist. Everybody knew to a farthing every other person's income, even that of compensatees; and any affectation of superiority in anything but culture or ability became practically useless. The result was that as ability could neither be possessed or imitated at will, culture, and especially art-culture (as the most easily affected

by those destitute of both), became a standard by which social status was differentiated. People of pretension began to agree with one accord that homes were nothing if not artistic, that everything which could be made by hand rather than manufactured by the million ought to be handmade, that mechanical repetition of design was vulgar, that no two things ought to be alike, that mere cost was nothing and artistic beauty everything, and so forth. This of course was the mere fashion of the day, selected because most other aspects of fashion were extinguished. But it had the enormous advantage of being a correct, true, and priceless one, and what was largely an hypocrisy with the generation of 1905, became a virtue and an instinct with its successor from mere force of education and habit. Hence that resuscitation of all the splendid arts and lost crafts of the middle ages which has been so conspicuous a feature of the last quarter of a century; and which has given us back the tapestry, the wood-carving, the hammered metal-work, the sculpture, the stained glass, the furniture, and the embroidery of our forefathers, all undefiled by the mould and the machine which had been the joy and adoration of the nineteenth century "philistine" Individualists.

To the newly formed Council of Art was assigned the duty of withdrawing the diplomas it granted, if any holders failed distinctly, after due warning, to make an adequate return of works of art to the State in return for their credit allowances. It was part of its functions to examine the quotum of art-production sent in by each diplomé to the yearly or half-yearly exhibitions of his town or district, which latter were to be a *sine qua non* of the local institutions of the kingdom. It was intended, after two or three years' working of the Council (as at first constituted), to extend its electorate by the inclusion of all diplomés, and to discontinue the special status of the original eight societies. Briefly, a very short experience of the new régime indicated the imminence of a revolution in British art following on its introduction. Never before had there appeared such examples of ambitious (and successfully ambitious)

effort. The diversion of the whole output of the artistic profession into public channels (with the exception of course of such extra work as artists might execute in their leisure for their friends, or to exchange with brother artists, &c.) not only stimulated a generous rivalry amongst the painters and sculptors, but enormously developed the popular interest in and enjoyment of art ; while incidentally the artist as an individual began to acquire the status and prestige previously accorded to his contemporary and predecessor in France and mediæval Italy.

There remained two classes of intellectual workers with whose special fields of industry it was somewhat less easy to deal.

The writers of successful plays were obviously so valuable to the community that they were at once put on the full credit list, with *carte blanche* as to the return made therefor, it being of course understood that they continued to write for the Recreation Board. But the adjusting of the status of journalists and authors was a more complicated matter. Only experiment could decide which of the innumerable periodical prints would survive the extinction of competition and private profit, and the proposed colossal extension of the Public Library system could not fail materially to affect the position of authorship. As regards many daily and weekly prints, they were already defunct. The financial papers, the bulk of the trade journals, the petty organs of the betting fraternity, several of the old party dailies, and generally speaking the whole of the periodical press which depended for any considerable portion of its income upon advertisements, had all closed their shutters long ago, while very many of the others were on the verge of extinction from the cessation of subscriptions. To deal with the rest, the Publishing Department of the Board of Trade (constituted by invitations to the leading publishers and the Council of the Society of Authors)

undertook to maintain for twelve months from June 24th, 1905 (for sale at the current prices), the issue of all the recognised monthly and quarterly magazines and reviews, the weekly prints of standing, all the first class newspapers, and the parliamentary and law reports. The staffs of these would therefore, if willing, be retained for that period. A National Gazette emanating from the Government, of an entirely official character, would be issued daily in conjunction with a similar Gazette from the leading municipalities for administrative purposes. This would be all the State contribution to the literature of the period.

Such authors as could show that they had maintained themselves wholly by writing were consulted individually as to their future avocation, and in many cases offers in connection with the public libraries throughout the country were accepted. Writers on subjects which suggested utility in connection with the centres of learning were as far as possible provided with positions in the teaching bodies of colleges and universities. Specialists in any branch of literary record or research were mostly added to the staffs of the Education Board in various capacities. Of the rest, very many were only too thankful to occupy themselves in farming, gardening, and other trades, as an escape from the drudgery of the pen. The few whose copyrights brought them in incomes, from home or abroad, preferred to rank (along with several dramatists in a similar position) as compensatees. Apart from these arrangements, the Privy Council was empowered to place on the list of pensionaries those persons who were well known to be engaged in scientific or literary work of a kind obviously useful to the community, thereby enabling their services to be continued not only undisturbed but in many cases with increased convenience.

As regards speculative or private publishing of literary works of any kind, the industrial changes undoubtedly operated to put a check on the facility with which hitherto any one with a moderate superfluity of cash could rush into print

at his own expense. The extraordinary speed with which compositors had come to work under the desperate competition of the old régime was not in the least likely to be maintained under the new one ; and with a more leisurely and reasonable rate of work would come doubled or trebled expense. It would be no longer possible for an ordinary citizen to afford the luxury of publishing a three-volume novel out of his (or probably her) private pocket, without several years of saving for the purpose ; although an admiring congregation might perhaps be induced to subscribe the cost of a set of sermons by their favourite pastor. The Department was prepared to consider applications from authors who desired to have their works published by the State, and these works were in the first instance laid before two members of the Reading Committee (consisting of about one hundred of the most experienced editors and publishers' readers), and a favourable decision from one of them would be reviewed by the Council of the Department. If the work were accepted, the writer was accorded a proportionate pension free of State service, which was extended pro rata if the sale of the work warranted it. But every such application involved the writer submitting the first chapter of his work, or a minimum of 3,000 words, in print at his own expense ; a stipulation which had the double advantage of enabling the official reader to form a more accurate judgment on the merits of the work, and of eliminating all aspirants but those who were willing to subject themselves to a certain amount of self-denial in order to afford the preliminary outlay.

The subscriptions of members of the various learned societies continued to enable their proceedings and papers to be published as heretofore. But more extensive and important scientific works, coming from recognised technical experts, were to be brought out by the Department, either in response to a sufficient amount of private subscriptions, or on the recommendation of the learned society concerned with the particular subject dealt with. It was hoped that this would not be more

unsatisfactory than the old system of compelling such writers to publish at their own entire cost and risk, if they were able to publish at all.

For the rest of the literary world there were the alternatives of paying for their own publishing by instalments of their credits, or by subscription as above, or of learning to be their own compositors; and it need scarcely be said that one general result of the changed conditions of the typographic art was the cultivation of the utmost possible conciseness of style and concentration of material in literary effort.

All books published by the Department were sold at cost price (allowing for any pensions involved) *plus* 10 per cent. for distribution, and the public was given the whole benefit of the diminished expense arising from larger editions. Privately published works were allowed to be on sale in all State Stores, and the receipts were returned to the author till his expenses were liquidated. They were then credited to him, so far as any margin over cost of production continued, as a set-off against his liability to State service. But experience showed that the immense multiplication of Free Libraries, and of duplicate copies therein, operated to prevent the receipts of authors, who were not included in one or other of the categories above-mentioned, being sufficiently large or continuous (except in rare cases) to secure any notable exemption from the necessity of following some other avocation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE list of legislative innovations of conspicuous importance closed with a complete reform of the systems of Judicature and of Finance.

Based upon the principle that the administration of justice must be free to every citizen, and not prostituted to make a means of private profit, the Judicature Amendment Act neces-

sarily swept away every vestige of a system of which the chief result, if not the sole object, had been to cause expense to the suitor, to encourage and aggravate injustice, and to enable evildoers to escape scot-free. All previous statutes bearing on civil and criminal offences were repealed as regards British subjects, and the old law was only left operative in connection with special features of treaties already made with foreign countries.

The first section of the new Act provided that no civil suit in connection with an asserted contract should be commenced unless the contract had been registered at the time in the shape of a written document; while no contract was to be registrable without the certificate of the chief registrar of the borough or county court that it was equitable upon the face of it and unambiguous in terms. Contracts involving any phase of immorality, gambling, or betting were ineligible for registration.

The second section confined the jury system to criminal cases, and made it optional for the prisoner to claim to be tried with or without a jury. It extended the number of jurymen to sixteen, gave the verdict to a majority of twelve, and provided that, for every juryman obliged to leave the box before the decision was called for, one less should be required to make up the necessary majority. Every juryman was required to be a person filling, or having filled, some public office to which he had been elected by his fellow citizens.

The third section extinguished the paid advocate, the crowning curse of the mockery of justice which had endured for so many ages, and permitted parties in civil or criminal actions to appear before the courts only on their declaration that they had received, and were to receive, no remuneration for their services. It also enabled any citizen to appear before any class of judicial authority on his own or another's behalf.

The fourth section provided the machinery to be substituted for the venal services of the hired advocate. After the

committal by a magistrate, every defendant's trial was to commence within four weeks before three judges, of whom two were to be in communication with the prisoner, his accusers, and the police, while the third remained aloof till the case came on. Any evidence or inquiry requested or suggested by either side was to be secured or provided free of expense; and the two examining judges were required to listen to representations made to them by friends of the accused. The trial, when commenced before the three judges, might be adjourned if a prospect of further evidence being forthcoming presented itself, but otherwise was to be concluded at the time. In the event of a verdict of "Not Proven" (as an alternative to "Not Guilty") being given, the case might, however, be gone into again at any future date, and an opposite decision come to, if warranted by fresh evidence. In the event of the defendant demanding a jury, the latter was addressed by the two examining judges instead of by counsel, and the third summed up; upon the verdict of three-fourths of the jury, as already stated, the sentence (if any) was awarded. In civil suits much the same procedure followed, and appeals lay direct to the House of Lords within a month in all cases above a certain standard of gravity. The law lords sat in committees of three for all cases except those involving a capital sentence or a long term of penal servitude, in which instances all the available judges sat and a majority of two-thirds (or more, if that fraction were not exactly forthcoming) was necessary for the affirmation of the sentence already passed. All necessary witnesses could attend on subpœna, and if away from their homes were provided with board and lodging at the place of trial. Special accommodation and facilities were provided for female witnesses who could not leave home without one or more of their children accompanying them. Various minor provisions followed, all tending to hasten and simplify the administration of justice, and to purify it from the almost ineradicable stain of venality, chicanery, delay, expense, clumsiness, and oppression which had for so many ages defiled and degraded it.

The rest of the Act consisted of a complete Civil and Criminal Code,* which repealed all previous legislation of any kind whatever connected with civil or criminal offences, and abolished the absurd distinction between felony and misdemeanour. This Code had been prepared by the Legal Council of the Phalanx some years previously, and having been subjected to the closest criticism, correction, and revision all that time, could now take the place of the old Statute and Common Law at a moment's notice, thus placing the judicature of this country for the first time on the level occupied by France a whole century previously.

Of those provisions of the Code which had special reference to the new industrial régime, we need only mention the penalties attaching to the neglect of or refusal to work by the employés of the State. These consisted of three grades, of which the first was public "censure" by the local judiciary, the second imprisonment as the result of several successive offences for the earlier instances of which an "official warning" had been incurred, and the third imprisonment direct. Advertisement of all offences and punishments, "censure" of course included, in the local Official Gazettes—known later as "blacklisting"—was decreed for all cases, and copies of the "black lists" in the shape of posters were also directed to be exposed to view at the local townhalls, or at the local Finance Offices in places where there were no municipal headquarters near at hand or sufficiently central. Offences of gross neglect of duty, refusal to work, wilful damage to materials, machinery, tools, or stock, obstruction of other workers, or absence from work without cause, were punishable by direct imprisonment. Successive cases of unpunctual attendance or palpable shirking of work were met by "official warning" (without publicity); and the fourth such case was followed by imprisonment. "Judicial censure" was applied to cases of objectionable language or bearing,

* Expressed, by the way, in English, and not in lawyerese.

favouritism, unfairness or oppressive control, and avoidable errors of judgment on the part either of workers or managers, where the question of attention to duty was not involved. Complaints, charges, and demands for more suitable work were to go direct to the local judiciary, and records of their decisions to be sent to the secretary of the Board under whose cognizance the avocation of the parties concerned might come.

It is hardly necessary to say that male prisoners in gaol were made to work in every case where health permitted; while refusal to work in gaol was punishable in the first instance by a reduced dietary, and, if that were ineffectual, by flogging, the infliction of this last persuasive being duly advertised in the gazettes and official posters.

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The Court of Chancery was retained as the official guardian of orphans and of deserted and friendless children, all of whom were *ipso facto* wards of the Court. It was also, through its local branches, the authority to which appeals were to be made in reference to the administration of child-credits. These were, in the ordinary course, assigned to the fathers of the children until the latter came of age. But the Court had power to transfer the credits, on cause being shown, to the mother or some appointed guardian; while in extreme cases of neglect or unfitness it could assume charge of the children itself during their minority. Its functions also included the administration of the Reformatory Act formerly alluded to.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE measure called the State Credit Act provided for the extinction of all kinds of indirect taxation (whether of customs or excise) on the 24th of June, 1905; the customhouses and inland revenue staffs, &c., being utilised in connection with

arrangements by which the income-tax collecting offices provided for registering the population for the purpose of credit assignments.* A special clause ordered the registration of every citizen at a certain fixed domicile, which could be altered at will, but must be made the subject of official notification. When a citizen's duties involved constant change of residence or no fixed residence at all, his domicile was taken to be that of his departmental head-quarters. To preclude as far as possible the fraudulent assumption of the right to have no occupation and the consequent evasion of the Vagrants Act, lists of the compensatees registered in each district were posted at the chief Finance Office of the district, where all the Savings Bank business was carried on, credit cards issued, and payments by instalments registered.

As regards these last details it may be mentioned that to prevent possible inconvenience (arising from non-familiarity with the credit-system), the cards were issued at first with the limit of a month's credit, the rest standing to the owner's account at the local Finance Office, to be drawn upon as fast as a card was filled up, and replaced by another. In this way the accidental loss of the card (for which no allowance could possibly be made†) was rendered as little disadvantageous as possible. All payments by instalments (including rent and income-tax), for which the credit-holder had made himself liable, were deducted in advance, and a running acccount was kept at the Finance Office of issue. When greater familiarity with the system had led to more rigid care in safeguarding the credit-cards, they were issued if desired for quarterly and eventually half-yearly amounts ; but very soon it became the practice with the great bulk of holders to bank all their credit allowance not in immediate use, and to draw it out (on a card) in exactly the same way as from the old Post Office Savings

* The statistics of imports and exports, formerly furnished through the Customs, were now of course obtained direct by the Board of Trade.

† In view of probable fraudulent claims for unexpended balance of credit on cards asserted to be lost.

Banks. With a single exception, no use of the credit other than a personal one was possible ; but it was found convenient to permit the purchase of cab and carriage coupons for various sums, so that a person engaging a vehicle in the public streets could get in and out without the loss of time necessitated by attending a public-vehicle office, if he chose to carry a coupon or two in his pocket. The coupons could only be used for cab hire, and were of no use to the coachman for purposes of purchase ; so that this remote approximation to a paper currency was of necessity a perfectly harmless concession to the public convenience.

As soon as credit-cards were filled with the details of purchases, they were replaced by new ones, and the balance, if any, transferred to the fresh cards, while the actual convenience of the card system was probably greater than that of the old plan of carrying a purse. Before long, the plan which has come down to the present day was inaugurated, of depositing a certain amount of credit with the particular State Stores most accessible to householders or residents generally, and drawing goods against this till it was exhausted, precisely as with the Civil Service Stores of the previous century. The actual use of the card was thus limited to theatre-going,* &c., to the casual purchase of refreshments, or to unforeseen exigencies.

* All seats at the theatres, music-halls, concert-rooms, and other principal places of amusement were numbered, and could be reserved up to the hour of opening the doors to the public. The district telephone offices were connected with all these places of resort, and applicants could book seats anywhere in any number by showing their credit-card with its register-number. Admission to the secured seats was obtained at the box-offices of the theatres, &c., by presenting the credit-card which had secured them. Some of the theatre-committees kept seats open for the bookers thereof until the end of the opening piece or of the first act ; but the very great majority cancelled all bookings after the first rise of the curtain, in order to secure punctual attendance and prevent abuse of the booking facilities. Each telephonic booking-office had automatic "vacant" and "taken" seat-plans (on the principle of the "in" and "out" indicators in public libraries), so that applicants could see at a glance what seats were yet unbooked. In the reconstruction of the places of amusement, all seats were of course made equally comfortable ; but the choice of position in the house was simply a matter of first come, first served.

The Finance Offices also regulated and recorded, on behalf of the Treasury, all employment of State servants or purchase of State stores and materials by local bodies for purely local purposes. For instance, if a municipality decided to levy a local income-tax* of sixpence in the pound for municipal objects, the credit-account of every resident was made the subject of the required deduction (either in one sum or by instalments, at option), and the municipality was then entitled to labour and materials to the aggregate value of the deductions. This system had the advantage of working with the utmost smoothness and facility, while no arrears were possible and there was no loss for expenses of collection. All rents were of course deducted in advance, like income-tax, from the citizens' credit-accounts.

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The Currency Act was practically the last piece of sessional legislation which involved a fundamental departure from the business arrangements of the old régime. It extinguished bullion, coin, notes, and currency of every kind as a tender for anything demanded or supplied by the State throughout the United Kingdom. It permitted persons entering the realm from abroad to acquire credit-allowances at the ratio of 4 in gold to 1 in credit, and instituted the same proportion in the case of compensatees and holders of consols and local bonds, who were now to have their interest paid either in gold at the nominal amount to which they were entitled, or in credit to the amount of one-fourth.

The explanation of this provision was obvious. The calculations of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade had made it clear that Ministers had been greatly within the mark in assuming that the cost price of all commodities under the new régime would certainly on the average never exceed one-third of the retail price under the old, and that this decidedly underestimated the reduction in the cost of house and

* Replacing, of course, the old iniquitous rate on rentals.

living accommodation. A credit of £1 evidently represented to the ordinary citizen at least £3 in gold under the late system, and in addition there required to be estimated the value in gold of the various free privileges* to which credit-holders were now entitled. This was considered to enhance the value of the credit unit by at least one-third more, making the credit pound equal to four pounds in gold under Individualism here or elsewhere. In other words the average head of a household, receiving under the new régime 21s. per week, while his wife received the same, and (say) two children 14s. per week each, was rather better off than if he had earned £700 a year before the Revolution—to say nothing of the fact that all occasion for providing for the future of his family had passed away.†

It was in order to place no restraint on the freedom of action of compensatees and dividend-holders, who might wish to travel or reside abroad, that they were given the choice between payment at par in gold (which was of course perfectly useless in this country as a medium of exchange), or at 75 per cent. discount in credit if they preferred to remain in Great Britain. In the case of foreign visitors, travellers, or residents the same conditions applied, and their gold being of no service here was to be exchanged for credit at the above-mentioned discount to the amount desired. State employés going abroad were entitled to exchange their credit balances for gold at the same rate.

We need hardly remind the reader that from the 24th of June, 1905, the Government possessed and could enforce an absolute monopoly of the sale of everything purchasable, and was empowered to regard as a contravention of State service any aspect of private trading carried on by British subjects within these islands.

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* Viz., transit, education of every grade, medical attendance, public amusements, libraries, &c. (page 6).

† The effective credit per week has risen steadily (from 21s.) to 24s. in 1910, 30s. in 1915, and 38s. in 1925. The average family income at present (1930) would represent about £1,500 a year under the old régime.

CHAPTER XXX.

An account of the session of 1905 would be incomplete without reference to an episode which indirectly led to a modification of the functions of the House of Lords almost as significant as the more formal changes which were brought about in the industrial system of the country.

The cry of "Abolition of the House of Lords," which was periodically resuscitated during the last decade of the century, expressed of course in a general way the objections of the doctrinaire democrats to non-elected and irresponsible legislators. But it also represented a final struggle of the brigand class to prevent the Budget being used to attack the colossal swindle of Liberal-Tory finance in connection with local and imperial taxation. The Collectivists had urged unceasingly that almost every measure of real social and industrial reform meant expense; that that expense must inevitably fall upon the over-burdened rate-paying occupiers so long as property owners escaped scot-free; that a reformed Budget with Graduated Income-Tax could be made to provide practically unlimited funds for relief of local rates, reform of poor-law, free education, hospitals, and payment of members; that the Budget was the one weapon of reform against which the Lords were powerless; and that every Government which deliberately declined to utilise that weapon (while wasting time on bills which the Upper House could and did almost uniformly reject) was simply betraying the nation. As a result, even the rank and file of the Liberal-Radical electors began to recognise the systematic treachery of their leaders in refusing to pass a measure which, by a mere stroke of the pen, would treble the receipts from rates and taxes, while relieving the bread-winners of all but the lightest burden.

This awakening so seriously alarmed the ground-landlords, that they began to consider the expediency of resisting the Budget reformers in the Lower House itself. As it was out of

the question to demand that peers should have the entrée to either Chamber at their option, the only alternative was to secure the opportunity of dominating the Commons, even at the cost of sacrificing that status of the Upper House which was likely soon to lose its omnipotence for mischief. If, by abolishing the House of Lords, the door could be opened for millionaire peers to contest seats held by reformers, it was practically certain that the prestige and social effect of exalted rank, the influence of unlimited wealth spent in legal bribery, and the national snobbery so astutely organised by the ubiquitous Primrose Leagues, would secure the return of peers to Parliament in so large a number of middle-class Liberal constituencies that the democratic element in the Commons would be reduced to utter impotence. Reactionary electoral and fiscal legislation could then postpone all reform for at least a generation.

It is hardly necessary to say that the Collectivists, regardless of the execrations of the Radical "property" press, denounced through the length and breadth of the land the new scheme of blowing up the House of Lords in order to have the pieces come dropping into the Commons. They protested against the alternative of mending the Upper House, as being more dangerous than that of ending it; and they urged that the proper course was to leave the Hereditary Chamber exactly as it was, while giving the Crown power to assent to any Bill which had passed the House of Commons in two successive Parliaments, irrespective of the verdict which might have been passed upon it by the Lords.

But the advent to power of the Phalanxist Government, and the inauguration of the new régime, necessarily altered the whole complexion of matters; and the opposition to any extension of the peers' electoral privileges was now no longer called for.

It was quite natural, therefore, that during the progress of the National Property Bill one of the ultra Tory dukes should introduce a bill enabling any peer, who elected to waive his

right to sit in the House of Lords, to vote at elections of members of the other House and to become a candidate for a parliamentary seat. As soon as the fate of the Property Bill was found to be decided, a general feeling arose that the House of Lords was thereby rendered an obsolete factor in the political situation. This found expression in an almost unanimous claim, on the part of the peers, that they should no longer be disfranchised. The Peers' Enfranchisement Bill was at once adopted, and after a lively debate on the second reading (in the course of which the almost grotesque position in which the Lords would be placed under the new régime was quite adequately realised) was carried by an enormous majority. The measure was not opposed in the Lower House, and it received the Royal Assent at the same time as the National Property Bill, of which it was the logical sequence.

The effect of these two statutes was practically to extinguish the Upper House as a legislative chamber. In view of the fact that the Government had no intention of modifying any of their long-considered proposals after their passage through the Commons, the attendance of peers became smaller and smaller as each succeeding Bill came up from the Lower House; and long before the end of the session all the business of the Lords was carried on, as a pure matter of form, by the officials alone. An informal gathering of leading peers, about the middle of June, resulted in a general understanding that (pending some special emergency) the further association of members of the House of Lords with the mere registration of measures agreed to in the Commons was useless and undignified, and had better be wholly discontinued. This decision met with no dissent from any quarter of importance. Henceforth the non-representative Chamber, without being formally abolished, ceased to exercise any real legislative action whatever, and remained a part of the Constitution only in its judicial capacity (through the functions of the law lords) as the final Court of Appeal.

So passed away, in fact if not in name, a piece of legislative machinery probably the most mischievous and useless of which history affords any record. The *personnel* of that machinery, the British Peerage, had accomplished the unique feat of demoralising at once the commerce, the society, the law, the Church, and the government of the nation it had so long dominated, and it may truly be said to have touched nothing that it did not defile. Of its political action we have more than once spoken; its epitaph in other respects needs only a few words.

Professing to scorn trade, it had derived the greater portion of its colossal wealth, not only from the commerce it despised, but from the most discreditable abuses of it. It had commenced by preaching it to be infamous that one of its body should earn his own living, and ended by making it impossible for three-fourths of the rest of the nation to earn any adequate living at all. Claiming a monopoly of the chivalric elements of human character, it had laboriously produced, as the chief outcome of its doctrines and practice, the British snob. Based as was almost every title in the peerage on either domestic or political prostitution, it had by debauching the National Church extinguished the only agency which might have served the purposes of public morality. Separating itself by impassable barriers from contact with the toil, vice, crime, and misery out of which its fabulous riches were extorted, it prided itself upon the serenity of manner which was so excessively easy to acquire under the circumstances; while it accepted, as a religious dogma, the theory that it was a physically different order of human beings from the class on which it battened, and from which it sucked the very life-blood. In regard to its systematic and universal refusal to contribute any portion of its superfluous millions to public, municipal, or national objects, it was accorded by common consent the distinction of being absolutely the meanest aristocracy that ever existed in any age or country.

Personally and individually it need hardly be said that, with the rarest exceptions, the peers were inoffensive and well-bred

persons, of fully average intelligence and morality. Having no temptation to steal, they were mostly of incorruptible honesty. Not being pinched for money, scraping and cheese-paring in personal expenditure were seldom their characteristics. Being usually able and invited to do exactly as they pleased, their good temper was proverbial. The fact that most married peers were in a position to maintain several establishments, recognised or otherwise, enabled conjugal friction to be avoided whenever desirable, thereby conducing to a notable degree of ostensible harmony in the domestic affairs of the aristocracy. Toadied, flattered, truckled to, and crawled after, from the cradle to the grave, they were on the whole far from being as arrogant and supercilious in their personal address as might have been expected. Enjoying every requisite for the development of mental and physical health, they were as a rule blessed with excellent digestions; while regarded intellectually, they were not conspicuously below the average of less fortunately situated individuals. Although enabled to control the legislative machine by the most idiotic system of selection (that of the hereditary law-maker) ever devised by man since the dawn of history, they had seldom used it with a greater degree of greed, stupidity, or ferocity than usually accompanied the exercise of similar functions by persons owing their opportunities of irresponsible government to their own ability. Possessed of almost unlimited power to do evil, they quite frequently refrained from exercising it; and it may be recorded of the peers as of the lawyers, that in view of the relation to the community permitted to both under the Individualist régime, it was distinctly to their credit that they usually fell short of being monsters.

The limitation of the practical powers of the House of Lords to its functions as the highest Court of Appeal tended greatly, as might have been anticipated, to the enhancement of its dignity and importance; and the subsequent simplification of both civil and criminal procedure and jurisprudence was found to add considerably, not only to the work thrown upon the

Appellate Chamber, but to the confidence with which its decisions were received. The lapse of nearly a generation since the events we are narrating has only served to make clear that this ancient branch of the Constitution has, under its present aspect, at least as firm a hold upon the national support as any part of our governmental system, and will probably outlast in dignity and prestige any judicial body now existing in the old world or the new.

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It will be recollected that on the occasion of the Phalanx leaders being summoned to Osborne after the final resignation of the late Cabinet, they had intimated a desire to remain wholly unconnected with the Household appointments commonly regarded as part of the spoils of a victorious political party. On the Phalanx assuming office, the usual routine was so far departed from that no resignations from the direct *entourage* of the Sovereign took place. The functions of the offices in question were so anomalous and equivocal that no Phalanxist could have accepted them under existing circumstances; and failing Phalanxists it was of course a matter of indifference who or what the sinecurists might be.

The new Ministry scrupulously refrained from hinting at the slightest interference with the existing aspects of the Civil List, or the patronage of offices unconnected with the public administration. Thanks to this politic reserve, the position of the overpaid and grotesquely useless functionaries who surrounded the Sovereign became every day more offensive and ridiculous. The passing of the National Property Act, and the concurrent enfranchisement of the peers, made the continuance of the old state of things at Court intolerable; and the various noble lords and scions of the aristocracy, who filled these sinecure offices, shrank from the contrast between their lavish salaries and the modest expense at which the real government of the country was carried on. The Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State, and in fact all servants of the

Crown, were receiving merely the regulation credit. But a herd of uniformed loafers, to the number of about one hundred and thirty,* drew salaries (besides in most cases their "keep") of £2,500 downwards for doing practically nothing whatever. These persons began to feel so uncomfortable under the cynical tolerance of the Ministry, and the conspiracy of silence on the part of the Government ranks in the Commons, that a movement obtained headway which led, early in July, to the Premier being summoned to Windsor to consult with the Sovereign in regard to the Civil List. The result of several interviews was made known to the country a few days later. Ministers announced in the Commons that the Sovereign had graciously proposed to discontinue the salaries of all ornamental and sinecurist offices whatever (while, it was understood, leaving the posts open to unpaid volunteers), and to place all employés at Court who actually performed necessary or useful functions on the ordinary rate of allowance. All uniforms, appointments, &c., were to be provided free. The financial reform consequent on this arrangement permitted of a reduction of the Civil list from £400,000 odd to about £30,000 a year; while the composition of the Court remained almost unaltered through the readiness with which the honorary posts were sought after and filled by the same

* Including Chamberlains, various, at £2,000, £924, &c., a year; lords-in-waiting (each £200); grooms-in-waiting (each £330); extra-ditto; masters-of-the-ceremonies, various (£500); gentlemen-ushers-of-privy-chamber (each £200); gentlemen-ushers-daily-waiters (each £250); grooms-of-privy-chamber, gentlemen-ushers-quarterly-waiters, grooms-of-the-great-chamber, pages-of-the-back-stairs (each £250); state-pages, pages-of-the-chamber, pages-of-the-presence (each £200); pages' men, sergeants-at-arms, yeomen-of-the-guard (captain at £1,200); gentlemen-at-arms (captain at £1,200); almoners, various; lord-steward (£2,000), treasurer-of-household (£904), comptroller-of-ditto (£904), master-of-ditto (£1,158), paymaster-of-ditto (£1,000), comptroller-of-accounts (£1,000), governor of Windsor Castle (£1,200), hereditary-grand-falconer (£965), master-of-buckhounds (£1,500), master-of-horse (£2,500), crown-equerry (£800), equerries- in-ordinary (each £600 to £500); extra-equerries, pages-of-honour (£150); to say nothing of bed-chamber-women (each £300), maids-of-honour (£300), extra-ditto, ladies-of-the-bedchamber, extra-ditto, extra-bedchamber-women, &c., besides footmen and coachmen, flunkeys galore, and all the army of smaller fry who helped each other to do nothing like their superiors (see "Whittaker's Almanac," *passim*).

aristocratic class which had previously been content to accept preposterous salaries for the execution of purely nominal duties.

These changes in the *entourage* of the Sovereign and in the legislative activity of the House of Lords inflicted a blow on the Republican party in the United Kingdom from which it has so far not recovered. The Crown itself was, as we have said, exceedingly popular at this juncture. As time passed on, it became increasingly difficult for the mere doctrinaire democrats to bring forward any valid reasons for a change in our existing constitutional arrangements. In theory, a country was none the less a republic because its self-governing citizens chose, of their own free will, to have an hereditary nominal Chief of the State. In practice, the unutterably wearisome functions appertaining to that purely ceremonial office were admittedly fulfilled by Royalty at least as well as they could possibly be by any elected representative; with the additional advantage that a dozen satisfactory deputies were always provided by the institution itself.

Nobody now suggested that, if we were to have a President, he should be merely the most popular, astute, or successful wire-puller of a political party, or a dummy put in with a view to keep someone else out. On the other hand, if we were so lucky as to possess half-a-dozen private citizens of such transcendent merit, ability, and reputation as to mark them out the representative Englishmen of their time, there was scarcely the least probability that a single one of them could be induced to undergo, on any terms, what to him would be virtually a term of penal servitude. Under these circumstances, a family which was both willing and qualified to work the treadmill of a nominal sovereignty, without making a grievance of it, was recognised to confer a conspicuous benefit on the community. The monarchical aspect of our political system has consequently long ceased to be in any sense a public question, and is now only discussed in juvenile debating societies as an alternative to the merits of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the propriety of beheading King Charles the First.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE assignment of compensation was the longest and most tedious of all the tasks which had been undertaken by the Government.

The new value of the national property in land and buildings was determined by the various professional committees which had been appointed by the local authorities, at the request of the Board of Supply, to decide upon the way in which property, now useless for its old purposes, was to be made to serve new ones. A brief reference to what was done in this way in London will furnish an illustration of the routine throughout the country.

First and foremost came the necessity of settling what old shop property and what new structures should serve the purposes of State Stores, and what buildings and sites should be reserved for places of amusement, galleries of art, educational institutions, &c. This was a comparatively simple matter, involving primarily the question of facility of access and egress. Next followed the utilisation of shops, offices, and warehouses no longer needed for business purposes. When it is recollected that probably not one such building in a hundred was now required for its original purpose, the extent of the property thrown upon the hands of the Board of Supply will be seen to have been prodigious.

In determining the particular alterations to be made in dealing with this class of structure, regard was had by all the sub-committees to the fact that a gigantic development of the "flat" system was to be looked for as an inevitable outcome of the credit-allowance arrangements. The incomes of families were now exactly in proportion to the number of credit-holders therein. A vast number of people whose family circles were limited to one or two members would accordingly find that comforts and luxuries, far beyond their reach in a small household, would be readily obtainable by an extension of the club

and boarding-house system, and by the use of sets of chambers attended to by a staff of domestics engaged for the service of all the suites in one block. While there would always remain a large section of the community to prefer "houses of their own," the number of those who would find a balance of comfort in dispensing with some of the responsibilities and cares of separate house-keeping would be constantly on the increase. It was from this point of view that the London sub-committees reorganised a large proportion of the commercial street-property coming under their cognisance.

In the City, where palatial piles of offices nearly met across narrow streets, with dingy warehouses in the rear, the plan was almost universally followed of taking quadrangular or similarly shaped areas (bounded by existing street fronts) of the best and latest modern buildings, clearing out the whole of the interior property, and converting it into ornamental gardens. The offices facing outwards were converted into suites of bedrooms (as requiring less light), while new living rooms, public and private, were built against the backs of the offices to face inwards. Central portions of the gardens were occupied by ponds and fountains. Spacious covered balconies ran round certain of the floors, and in many cases the roof formed a level garden and promenade, partly protected with glass for use in wet weather. Miles of street property were treated in the same way, the old shopfront structures being retained when of first-class modern construction, and rebuilt when antiquated or inferior. Immense areas at the back of leading thoroughfares were cleared for squares and gardens, and new inner fronts built against the line of shops in the same way as in the City. In the majority of the West End streets and squares, the whole length of the frontage between any two transverse streets would be thrown into one building by breaking through the party walls, and the rooms in twenty or thirty houses would be served from one central administration. Public dining, drawing, and amusement rooms were provided by throwing several rooms together as needed, and

frequently included two storeys in one chamber to gain height and air.

As fast as these blocks were ready for occupation, tenders were invited from any committees which might be formed with the view of securing, amongst their acquaintances, a sufficient number of tenants and renters to absorb all the private rooms therein ; the nominees being balloted for as at a club. The first responsible committee which applied had the refusal for a limited period. If it was then unsuccessful, another had the chance, or the Board of Supply proceeded to let the accommodation, furnished and unfurnished, to the general public on its own account. But the first alternative was designed not only as a concession to that spirit of cliquism and of exclusiveness which characterised every grade of society at the period, but also as a protection to the residents under any given roof against offensive or objectionable companionship in the public apartments ; and it was very largely taken advantage of. Some of the combined blocks were reserved for adults only, while others were open to families ; and a few were set apart for women. The committees could manage the commissariat arrangements themselves, or leave them to the Board. But in neither case could any profit-making be permitted, as all payments for rent, purchases of provisions, payment for lighting, service, &c., were matters of credit-account between the tenant-customers, the committee, and the nearest Finance Office, as representing the Board of Supply.

Taking the number of rooms required by an average family occupying a separate tenement at ten or twelve, it will be seen that a considerable population was provided for when at least fifty miles of first-class five, six, and eight storey property was turned into suites of moderate sized rooms, of which an ordinary family only required four or five for private use, while they took advantage of the public accommodation in their particular block for the rest of their requirements.

The bulk of the small house-property (the total of which was of course enormous) was not dealt with in this fashion, but was

simply let at rents varying from a fourth to a twentieth of its former value. As the building of villa and "flat" residences outside London progressed in consequence of free transit and the almost nominal cost of land for gardens, many of the fourth-rate residential streets became unlettable at any rent (although a great deal was offered as low as £1 per house). This involved the usual routine of providing open squares and gardens before their letting value could be restored. Partly in view of the stringent demands of the new sanitary authorities in regard to the minimum cubic space per head for sleeping-room in families, and partly to keep unattractive cottage property tenanted, some thousands of four, five and six-roomed houses were altered by throwing two, and sometimes three, into one. In a large number of the less crowded thoroughfares and side-streets, the system was adopted of reducing the public way to the narrowest dimensions consistent with the passage of vehicles, and of converting the space so gained into gardens for the tenements. Shrubs, plants and flowers were offered on nominal terms to tenants desirous of the opportunities of floriculture thus presented; and everything was done in the way of outside decoration and internal renovation to diminish or remove the unutterable monotony and hideous ugliness which had hitherto characterised the whole of the property occupied by the working-classes in town and suburb.

The slums were closed against occupation, and the results of the industrial change were probably nowhere so remarkable as in the filthy, rotten, and plague-stricken dens which had for so long been the only refuge of a million and a half of Londoners.

Whole districts were left to become a wilderness of deserted hovels, fast going to unseemly ruin, and presenting in their gloom, stench, and horrible foulness the most striking monument of the old régime that a Collectivist reformer could desire. Miles of houses in the East End were silent and deserted by the end of 1905, and in the winter of that year hundreds of acres of rookeries were burnt to the ground, or

blown up with dynamite by the Royal Engineers, after most of the timber had been removed for firewood. Mechanical picks and scoops were employed to transform the surface as fast as it was ready. Landscape gardening was then begun, and step by step the whole of the worst part of the region between Hackney and the Docks was turned into an immense park, through which the now pellucid Lea flows, and where large lakes reflect forest and reed in their waters.

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The preliminary survey of the London street property (aided by previous investigation where practicable) occupied many months from its commencement after the autumn elections of district and borough councils in 1904; and it was November, 1905, before the basis of compensation for metropolitan interests could be adjusted. In other parts of the country all this had been got over in the early autumn, and the assignment of annuities in respect of the capitalised estimate of compensation was completed in December.

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The arrangements made to meet the demands of private individuals for the building of new dwelling-houses, in accordance with their own special needs or predilections, were very simple. The intending householder having selected his plot of land (the rent of which followed the current rate fixed by the local borough or district council, as representing the National Board), he either detailed his requirements to the Construction Committee of the Council, or submitted his own plans and elevations. The Construction Committee consisted of the local superintendent-builders and architects in the borough or district, as the case might be, all of whom were bound to attend on Committee days. Their duty was to decide, first, if the proposed plans were such as to detract (or the reverse) from the future letting value of the building to an average tenant; and second, if the design of the elevations

was in harmony with reasonable artistic requirements. If the plans were such as to render the building almost useless to anyone but the proposed tenant, the Committee had power to decline to carry them out; and, if they were unfavourable to the prospect of letting, the ordinary rent (representing 3 per cent. on the actual cost of construction) was to be subject to enhancement as a kind of insurance against future loss.

The question of artistic design being one upon which the most urgent stress was continually laid by the recommendations of the Central Board, the local Committees were very cautious in passing elevations of a bald, ugly, or inharmonious character. But as it was desired to give the widest possible scope to individual taste (whenever it could be indulged without involving an eye-sore to the general public), it was the rule in all cases that a majority of two-thirds should be required to black-ball plans or designs submitted by the proposed occupier.

After construction, and taking over by the tenant, the full set of plans and a set of photographs of the exterior were deposited in the local Record Office. These constituted the basis on which future claims for improvements were to be made. The permission of the local Committee was required for all structural alterations or additions (or for the removal of trees); but the tenant, on leaving, could only claim compensation for those alterations or additions (made by himself), which had been formally accepted by the Committee as "improvements," and so marked on the plans. All changes of a permanent character which were carried out by the Committee at the request of the tenant, were paid for by a *pro rata* increase in rent.

Increases or decreases in value of occupied sites were determined by quinquennial valuation, and the ground-rent adjusted accordingly. In the case of competition for unoccupied sites or houses, the rental was put up to auction.

In order to secure that permanency of occupation which does so much to raise the ideal of home, and which encourages

the bestowal of personal care and thought on the decoration and improvement of domestic surroundings, it was provided that (subject to periodical adjustment of ground-rent, if called for) the tenant of any house should not only be guaranteed against disturbance during life, but should be entitled to assign the lease to any person by will. In the event of his dying intestate, the nearest relative in blood (determined by seniority in the case of equals), who chose to take over the lease, had the option of doing so without any fine. It is needless to remark that these arrangements were very much simplified by the fact of all rents being deducted by the State in advance, so that no question of arrears, or of non-payment of rent, could occur in any case.

The question of the architectural design of all new structures, whether for public or private use, was one in connection with which the Central Board exercised, for years, the most urgent and continuous pressure upon the local authorities. The desire to encourage variety and artistic originality led, in some places, to the somewhat severe regulation, that no two residences within sight of each other should present the same design of elevation; while the modern system of laying out the roads of residential property in curved lines was initiated quite early in the new régime. The Construction Committees were called upon to provide everywhere for periodical exhibitions of designs for houses, shops, and other required structures, and for schemes and details of decoration, in connection with the local schools of art; while it was urged that the freest possible use of the more successful examples should be made by the officials.

The reader will be quite prepared to hear that, at the outset of the above arrangements, prophecies were abundant that the whole machinery would soon break down under the universal demands of the citizens to have new houses built for them to suit their own whims and fancies—or if not, that hundreds of thousands of existing houses would lack tenants. The entire falsifying of these predictions arose in the first instance from

the fact that houses "to order" necessarily involved from twice to six times the rent of existing property, and consequently were only sought by that limited number of persons who were prepared to make a considerable sacrifice for originality. In the second place it unfortunately happened that a century of monotonous, vulgar, and soulless street architecture had so vitiated and blunted the taste of our town citizens, that the immense majority of people positively preferred the average town "gardens," "terraces," "crescents," "squares," &c. (so long as they had ample accommodation at a cheap rate); recognised something "harmonious" in a mile of identical designs, or no design at all; and found an outlook on a street thoroughfare to be distinctly "cheerful."

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In a different direction, a very valuable service to art and to archæology was rendered by the strenuous and elaborate care taken to preserve and rehabilitate all the really old and artistic buildings throughout the country, down to the smallest ancient cottages. Nothing could, of course, repair the vandalism of the previous years, during which numbers of Jacobean and Elizabethan buildings of great beauty and unimpaired soundness had been ruthlessly destroyed by the speculative builder, all over the land. But enough remained to hand down the tradition of the most charming domestic architecture the world has ever seen; and to prove to later generations, that in past centuries the constructive art in Great Britain had reached a point of artistic excellence, and of structural fitness, which our descendants will find a difficulty in approaching, and can scarcely hope to surpass.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CERTAIN important changes in connection with another class of property may be conveniently referred to in this place. These were, firstly, the complete revolution effected by the early Collectivist Administrations in the sources of heat and of motive power for most of our great manufacturing and metallurgical industries; and secondly, the break-up of the old industrial centres which followed thereon.

Nothing had been more obvious to the leaders of the State Industrialist movement than the absolute certainty, that as soon as occupations came to have their hours of labour adjusted by their relative popularity, or the reverse, the mining industries (especially that of coal), founding, smelting, and other metallurgical processes involving heavy labour, and a very high temperature, would be the first to be affected. It was evident that, unless some substitute for coal were sought in other directions, the reduction of the hours of miners and metal founders (in order to attract volunteers) would result in a serious shrinkage in the output of fuel and of metal products; while the expense of every branch of metal work on a heavy scale would rise proportionately.

To meet the latter eventuality, the greatest exertions were used by the Manufactures Board to perfect mechanical substitutes for puddling, and for other laborious operations in connection with the industries in question. But the very character and conditions of the coal industry stamped it as one which no civilised community would long tolerate, in any existing form, when once freed from the pressure of wage-slavery. It became, therefore, one of the first duties of a Collectivist Government to take the initial steps for the gradual supersession of coal as a heating agent, both for domestic and industrial purposes.

The first of these steps had already been taken in America, and on the continent. This was the extensive, if not entire,

substitution of the petroleum hydro-carbons for coal in the mercantile marine, the railways, and the great metallurgical processes. The use of petroleum became general amongst the foreign navies in the last decade of the nineteenth century (chiefly on account of the greater cleanliness, freedom from smoke, and facility of storage and trans-shipment); and, at the date of the Revolution, our Admiralty was the only one which had not abandoned the use of coal on board ship. The Phalanx Ministry proceeded at once to undertake the task of converting our heating appliances (other than domestic) to the patterns requisite for the consumption of liquid fuel, and at the same time offered apparatus and facilities to encourage its use in the household.

To place the nation in a position of security against various possible contingencies, at home and abroad, it was considered advisable to have a reserve store of petroleum equal to a probable three years' consumption of the new fuel. Our imports of hydro-carbons were accordingly increased from the usual amount of about £2,500,000* to over £30,000,000 per annum, as it was expected that about 75,000,000 tons of home-used coal would be displaced by petroleum fuel.† To provide for the storage of these large extra supplies, obsolete and superfluous ships of the navy and of the mercantile marine were converted into tanks. These were located in safe and suitable places at most of the seaports, where they could be filled direct by the petroleum steamers coming from the United States and from the Black Sea.

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But this was only a temporary measure. We were, of course, dependent upon foreign countries for our supplies of petroleum, and, in addition, they were a source of needless expense. The policy of the Phalanx called for the adoption

* In 1892, £2,446,906 (Board of Trade Returns).

† In 1892, 151,000,000 tons of coal (out of 181,000,000 raised) were retained for home consumption (Returns).

of processes of heating and lighting which would render us (as in the case of coal) independent of any community outside our own borders, and which would entail no burden on the industry of the nation. The Government, therefore, prepared to inaugurate the great scheme which had long been the dream and the ambition of mechanicians, and which had previously failed to gain acceptance simply and solely because, under an Individualist régime, the hostile mineral interests were altogether too powerful to tolerate so dangerous a competitor. We refer, of course, to the use of tidal power to generate electricity, and the substitution of the latter for both coal and the hydro-carbons.

It is needless to say that the diurnal tides provide a source of mechanical energy which only an Individualist community could have had the crass stupidity to leave unemployed, an agent of infinite power and of practically infinite extent, which never varied, was inexhaustible, and cost nothing whatever. When it is recollected that at points of the coast and at certain estuaries, like that of the Severn, the tide rises and falls as much as fifty feet,* it will be seen that no mechanical force available to man can even distantly approach the irresistible power of the sea's ebb and flow; and one can only marvel at the blindness which left a Collectivist Government to utilise for the first time on a comprehensive scale this stupendous natural phenomenon.

The Board of Manufactures commenced to use tidal power for its textile fabrics in 1908. Before the end of 1910 it had transferred to the sea-side most of the industries of any importance which required a large amount of motive power, with infinite benefit to the health of the workers and their physical enjoyment of life. In 1911 the great electric-power works on the Severn were completed. This enabled the previous partial introduction of electric traction on the railways to be so greatly extended that the bulk of the traffic could be at

* Airey (*Encyc. Metrop.*). Other high tides are at St. Malo (60 feet), Bay of Fundy (70 feet), and Annapolis (120 feet).

once carried on with electric engines, the accumulators being charged by dynamos worked free of expense by tidal power. Long before this, the universal introduction of electric services into private houses had led to all ordinary domestic culinary operations being carried on by means of electric cooking stoves,* owing to their advantages of coolness, cleanliness, and economy.

In 1912 the final revolution was inaugurated. The use of petroleum fuel, which had already driven coal and coal-gas out of the field for metallurgical processes requiring great heat, began to be superseded in that year by the excellent series of inventions which applied the absolutely unlimited supply of electric power now at the disposal of mechanicians to the separation of the hydrogen and oxygen in water, and enabled the greatest known degree of heat to be obtained by the subsequent combustion of the two gases in combination. From this time the use of the oxy-hydrogen flame for cooking on a large scale, for heating by hot air, water, or steam, or by ordinary stoves and cobble-grates, and for foundry and glass work, rapidly took the place not only of coal, but of coal-gas and petroleum itself; and the old problem of setting the Thames on fire was solved every morning by the twentieth-century Cockney. By the year 1915, all manufactures involving the extensive use of fuel in any form had been removed from inland towns to the sea-board. The greatest mechanical revolution of all time was now in full operation, and an economical triumph of the highest order had been gained over the forces of nature for the benefit of man. From this time the horrors of the Black Country, of the mining districts of the North, and of some parts of Lancashire, began to pass away from the earth and from men's memories; and in place of a hell, such as it had not entered into the heart of man even to conceive until the nineteenth century, the grass commenced to creep back—flowers raised their heads, and the sky-lark, wondering, returned to sing once more.

* This apparatus constituted one of the most noteworthy and valuable features of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

Not the least important, as it was certainly one of the most agreeable, of the results of the changes in the mode of producing heat was the elevation of London to the rank of the cleanest of the large cities of the world. With the cessation of the use of coal and hydro-carbons, and the substitution of the electric light and the smokeless oxy-hydrogen gas-fire and stove, the famous London fog and London "blacks" (which had previously fouled the turf and foliage as far as Reading) vanished into tradition; and under the somewhat severe discipline of the everlasting east wind, fresh from the North Sea, the metropolis showed by analysis the purest air of any large town in the empire.

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We have now described the more important of the operations undertaken as a result of the Acts placed upon the statute-book by the Collectivist Government of 1904-5. By those Acts the original programme of the Phalanx may be considered to have been completely carried out; and it may be convenient to briefly recapitulate the successive legislative measures by which the most important social and industrial changes recorded in history were effected.

The Taxation Act initiated the restitution of the national wealth to its producers.

The Agriculture Act solved the problem of unemployed labour by offering productive work to all seeking it, while the Supply Act provided for the absorption of the produce.

The Vagrancy Act eliminated the loafers and the dangerous classes, and (by penalising the absence of means of support for men) rendered possible the pensioning of the whole female population, with the accompanying extinction of prostitution and of the innumerable other evils inflicted on women by Individualism.

The Temporary Credit Act obviated friction and inconvenience while the State was supplanting the profit-monger.

The National Property Act annihilated industrial slavery, the murderous warfare of commerce, and the despotism of capital; restored the soil to the people; and made every citizen a co-partner in the firm of the nation.

The Judicature Act made law intelligible, and for the first time on record secured justice from being either delayed, denied, or sold.

These were the long-planned steps in the practical programme of the Phalanx; each was essential, and the sequence of each was imperative, inasmuch as only in such order could any one of them have been carried out. What was attempted to be done was done as a reality, not as a sham, and succeeded accordingly; and little was left undone, although much had to be done quickly. That changes, which might more comfortably have been spread over a dozen years, had to be effected in as many months, was not the fault of the Phalanx, but of those who tried to stem the torrent which they should have guided, and were in due course swept away by it.

Vast as were those changes, the new institutions and the machinery by which they were inaugurated were extremely simple; and the student of to-day may be inclined to smile at the ease with which order was substituted for chaos, peace for war, economy for limitless waste, efficiency and justice for blundering and plundering. Between the lines of the National Property Act alone might be read the whole transition from national slavery to national freedom, and on that great, just, and effective piece of legislation rests the almost limitless prosperity of the British Empire of our own time. By its enactment, the stupendous task undertaken by the Phalanx under conditions apparently so hopeless was virtually accomplished. Subsequent legislative and administrative activity did little more than provide for the complete carrying out of the provisions and principles of this Maxima Charta of modern industrial and social organisation.

Nearly three generations had passed away since the greatest writer of his century, describing the tremendous events which accompanied the downfall of the Old Régime in France, penned in half-a-dozen sentences a history, a prophecy, and a warning:

"*For long years and generations it lasted; but the time came. Consider it, look at it.' The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed Seigneur, delicately lounging in the Œil-de-Bœuf, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law: such an arrangement must end. Ought it not? But, O most fearful is* SUCH *an ending.' Let those to whom God, in his great mercy, has granted time and space, prepare another and a milder one.*" *

Seventy years later history repeated itself, and the prophecy was fulfilled. But the warning had been heeded; and the end came, not with the tears and blood of the Reign of Terror, but with the calm wisdom, the peaceful order, and the majestic justice of THE GREAT REVOLUTION OF 1905.

EPILOGUE.

INTO the minor social changes which are familiar to the citizen of this year of grace 1930, it is not necessary to enter. But a passing reference may be here made to some of the transitional phases which marked the emergence of the New Order out of the old Individualistic régime.

One of the most noteworthy was certainly an immense development of that fondness for external nature, and for the simplicity of genuine country life, which even the vices of

* Carlyle, "French Revolution," (1835).

competitive commercialism had failed to extinguish in our land; and nothing was left undone either by the local or Imperial authorities to restore what was possible of the picturesque element in our open and common lands.

Growing timber was protected, and trees were planted along the sides of roads and lanes in town and country. Great lakes were formed in suitable valleys, and the hillsides covered with millions of young firs, oaks, and larches. Rivers were restored to their ancient purity by removing all chemical and manufacturing operations from their banks, and by forbidding the slightest defilement of any kind. Pisciculture was sedulously carried on to stock the streams and lakes with fish, and angling was everywhere thrown open under the regulations of the various Conservancies.*

Whereas there had formerly been a severe competition for vacant land in the close neighbourhood of towns, to be used for private and market gardens (thereby causing the accessible open country to be continuously removed further and further from the citizens' use), just the reverse was the case under the Phalanxist Government. It was almost a matter of indifference to a Collectivist community *whence* its supplies were drawn—certainly fifty or a hundred miles counted for nothing if produce had to be transported at all; and on the other hand every one was interested in having unenclosed tracts of land within the shortest possible distance. With all the municipalities it now became a matter of the first importance to turn into wild open country all the space around their actual borders; to plant shrubberies, copses, and forests right up to the terminal streets; and, in allotting land for houses and

* Poaching and the irregular destruction of fish were practically abandoned the moment there was no market for the takes, as all the fish sold at the Stores was of course provided and obtained by the Board of Supply. For a similar reason, the imminent extinction of so many native flowers and ferns was suddenly arrested by the complete cessation of the ruthless raids of the "trade," with the result that a very considerable number of wild plants which had almost become traditional are now fairly common. The Stores sold no plants except cultivated ones. Wild birds were of course stringently protected.

gardens, to keep to certain definite lines of town extension rather than permit of all-round encroachment on the open country. Many thousands of acres of enclosed and cultivated land were thus thrown open, planted with woods and copses, gorse, heather, and bracken, provided with ponds and lakes, and encouraged in every way to return to a state of nature.

Certain of the more hideous characteristics of commercial "civilisation" were rapidly modified, on similar lines, by the Railway Board proceeding to plant the railway cuttings all over the country with rhododendrens and other ornamental evergreens, and to cover the embankments with forest trees. Their employés were also stimulated to compete with each other for honours and prizes awarded for the most successful permanent decoration of stations by shrubs, ferns, climbing plants, &c., and for displays of flowers at various seasons. The keen rivalry which arose under this system, and the interest taken by the travelling public in the relative success of the efforts coming under their criticism, eventually produced results which, to our visitors from abroad, were a source of considerable bewilderment. Unsightly bridges, sheds, and other structural atrocities of the late régime, were disguised or hidden from view in a similar manner.

In many directions the railways themselves were supplemented or superseded to a continually increasing extent by the extension of the canal system, which had been from the first a matter of primary concern to the Government. The extreme economy of canal transport, when once the waterway was provided, had always been known,* and had in fact been the chief reason why the exorbitantly expensive railways had secured possession of them under the old régime. In addition, the canals provided a most enjoyable mode of travel for those

* The Aire and Calder Company, some years ago, showed that a large mineral traffic could be carried at the fabulous cost of the one hundred and nineteenth part of a penny per ton per mile, including the return of empties. —*Daily Chronicle*, Jan. 12th, 1894.

who were not in a hurry; and no one was in a hurry under the Phalanxist régime, except in case of illness or accident. The provision of spacious and luxurious house-boats for passenger service on the inland waterways led to an immense development of canal travelling, independently of their use for the transport of heavy goods when time was no object. The new canals were carefully planned to run as far as possible through the most picturesque scenery on the required route; and holiday makers of this generation possess a means of locomotion, unknown to their progenitors, which compares in many ways favourably with the old coaching journeys of a hundred years ago.

The various works in connection with the formation of the canals, with the reclamation of marsh lands and foreshore, and with the system of afforestation, had the advantage (apart from adding greatly to the fixed wealth of the country) of providing the Government with a very convenient machinery for equalising the supply of labour and the demand for it. As the operations in question called for no particular regularity or urgency, or technical skill in the workers, and were to a large extent independent of the seasons, State employés could at any time be temporarily drafted into them from other occupations when the latter were, for the time being, overmanned.

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The shortening of the hours of certain trades, and the fact that some industries could advantageously be worked at longer than eight hours a day by means of shifts, enabled one or two concessions to be made to the old leaven of the desire to accumulate. This could hardly be expected to accept instant extinction, even under so complete a change of régime as had been effected; but it was a perfectly innocuous matter now that the machinery of competition was defunct and *the exploitation of other people's labour had become impossible.*

Accordingly, any man was at liberty to earn as much as he liked by his own exertions when opportunity offered, either by

working a full day (of eight hours) in a trade where the adjusted hours were fewer, or by over-time when eight hours were the rule, receiving credit *pro rata*. As a further concession, single individuals or parties were at liberty to receive land free of rent and to extract the utmost they could out of it for the State; on the terms of being credited by their only customer, the Board of Supply, with the value of the produce at the regulation first price, and of receiving as allowance for themselves everything over the £54. 12s. 0d. per head per annum which represented their personal credits. Similar opportunities were offered in the case of the art and other handicrafts (such as the making of certain domestic and other utensils, articles of furniture and of clothing, &c.) in which it was possible for the individual to supersede associated, or machine-assisted, effort. And in all cases where a normal standard of turn-out was recognised or established in any branch or centre of production, the various Administrations were directed to entertain proposals from groups of workers to be credited *pro rata* with the nett value of any excess of production (on the piece-work principle) which they might undertake to bring about in the particular industry with which they had exclusively to deal.*

As no man was under the slightest obligation or pressure to work for any other man, and as the increase of production (within needed limits) was an unmixed benefit to the community, no abuse or disadvantage was likely to attend these opportunities of acquiring incomes beyond the average.

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In connection with the adjustment of hours to trades, just referred to, it may be briefly mentioned that considerable progress had been made in this direction long before the expiry of the five years for which the Trade-Unions had (so to speak) enlisted. The Labour Bureau, having a record of all applica-

* These arrangements, certain extra privileges of nurses and teachers, and some other matters, were among the "compromises" referred to in the Premier's speech before the Property Bill division; and may be taken to qualify a remark on page 26.

tions for a change of avocation, and of the choice of a trade by those still in their studentship, afforded a most precise means of determining the rate of volunteering for each occupation. Contrary to previous expectation and prophecy, the so-called "gentlemanly" avocations (such as clerkships, &c.) were very little in demand by the new generation. Cabinet-making and engineering competed with the life of a sailor on board the passenger and fishing palaces of the Marine Board for the distinction of being the most popular calling in the eyes of the juvenile citizen. The building trades (including shipbuilding) came next, followed very closely by farming; clerkships, factory, mill, and chemical work took the next place; and then railway employ, the police, and similar open air avocations. Shopwork, tailoring, waiterships, and scavengering operations of various kinds came last but one. Mining and heavy foundry work brought up the rear.

Those who required to be in some sense specially endowed by nature for their selected avocations (such as men of science, doctors, teachers of youth, actors, musicians, artists, architects, decorators, landscape gardeners, &c.) are not included in the above category, as the question of competition for employment scarcely entered into their case. The demand for these latter rarely fell short of the supply, and frequently exceeded it; a difficulty which competition could not overcome when special natural gifts or exceptional knowledge were essential qualifications. It is hardly necessary to say that if the branches of trade preferred by applicants were too full to admit of their being accepted (though this could scarcely ever occur in a trade associated with the production of food or fabrics), the applicant was obliged to make another selection. Failing that, he had to be content to take part, *pro tem.*, in unskilled labour. As, however, the whole system involved an automatic self-adjustment of these points, no difficulty of any importance could arise. The reward of all kinds of labour, so far as income and privileges were concerned, was of course absolutely identical in every case.

Two or three years' experience made it evident that a reduction of hours to four per day would be required to get fresh volunteers for mining and foundry work, with proportionate concessions to the trades coming next in unpopularity; and these hours accordingly became the provisional rule for the occupations in question. Of course in a great majority of cases men continued to work the standard eight hours a day for a certain number of days, and few if any industries were worked for less than eight hours. But in a four hour trade, for instance, each man need only work three days per week, or two weeks out of four, or six months out of the twelve, if he kept full hours when he worked at all; and this was so immense a privilege that the rate of volunteering began to set the other way, and permitted of a fresh adjustment of hours in the direction of lengthening them again.

In the case of the all-important functions of the teachers and trainers of youth, it was found that the ordinary vacations (which in this special instance could not conveniently be modified) had to be supplemented by certain other privileges—such as free transport on over-sea steamers, coupons *à la* Cook and Gaze for foreign travel and so forth—in order to secure an adequate number of volunteers for what is perhaps the most wearisome and exhausting of all forms of drudgery, even to those who are best qualified to take part in it.

Very similar privileges were quite at the outset accorded to all women who engaged in professional nursing, including the care of children other than relatives. This is an avocation which, except perhaps in the cases of a few Heaven-inspired devotees, would seem not easy to be provided for when women were no longer compelled to work for a living. Fortunately for the early Phalanxist régime, a proposal was made by Royalty during the summer of 1905 to found and become patroness of an Order to be called that of the Nightingale Cross, which should be open to all women who had been employed continuously (and satisfactorily) for twelve months,

first, as nurses in hospitals; second, as nurses (not in hospitals) of invalids other than relatives; and third, in the care of children other than relatives. The cross for the last mentioned grade (called the Third Class) was of bronze, worn on a white ribbon; the next, of silver on blue; the First Class, of gold on black or any dark colour. These three Nightingale Crosses were to be worn only while the wearer was permanently following the special grade of work concerned, except in cases where five years' service (since 1905) had been filled in the same (or a higher) capacity, when the cross became a permanent decoration. The members of the order were all registered and required to report periodically as to their continuance of occupation; and further to place their crosses in the custody of the chief office of the Order if (or while) they discontinued service before the expiry of five years.

Being the only distinction entirely confined to women, the various crosses were highly valued. An inducement, soon found to be adequate (at all events when supplemented by the extra privileges above mentioned), was thereby offered for the undertaking of those offices of care, tenderness, sympathy, and benevolence, which money could no longer purchase, and the non-fulfilment of which would have been a serious defect in the New Order. As it was, the infinite importance of the unceasing care and watchfulness necessary in those assuming or entrusted with the charge of very young children, during many hours of absence from the maternal eye, was in reality for the first time formally recognised by the new arrangements. The elevation of the despised and underpaid nurse-girl to be the holder of the Nightingale Cross, the occupant of a special box for cross-holders at all the leading theatres, and the carefully accommodated traveller abroad or on British ocean steamers, implied in this respect a condemnation of the old régime as severe as it was conspicuous and well merited.

Among the earliest minor features of the New Order was the establishment, in every centre of population, of Bureaus of Domestic Service. From these, assistance in the household could be obtained at proportionate rates for the time occupied, the employés of course leaving when their work was completed. This arrangement was a necessary sequence of the universal pensioning of adult female citizens. Thousands of women, who would now refuse to accept the old status of "slavey," were nevertheless quite willing to add an extra half to their income by undertaking domestic work during definite hours of attendance, so long as they were then to be absolutely at liberty, and could live where and how they liked. On the other hand, in many households a few hours' help in the morning was all that was required, and the expense of engaging the whole work-time of a State employé was not called for. The Bureaus were the agencies through which these services were to be obtained, and the employés ranked, of course, as effectives. The institutions everywhere included sleeping accommodation and private rooms, at the usual rentals, for those employés who chose to utilise them; together with all the features of a comfortable women's club.

Another new departure was that remarkable development of the *crèche* system which is now so conspicuous a feature of our municipal institutions. The industrial and economic enfranchisement of the women of Great Britain, and the increased leisure of millions of the male workers, gave rise to a pressing demand for assistance in taking charge of infants and young children for short periods while the parent or parents made holiday or enjoyed recreation. An influential committee of the leading women doctors of the day was therefore formed to consider the details of a municipal *crèche* system. The results of their deliberations took effect in the first group of the admirable institutions now in operation in almost every centre of population throughout the kingdom, consisting of large and

cheerfully decorated buildings, with gardens and covered playgrounds and all the appointments of a first-class nursery (besides unlimited supplies of toys, games, picture-books, &c.), in which for a moderate payment young children of various ages can be left for limited periods under the care of specially trained nurses and a resident medical staff; while the expenses of construction and of maintenance (so far as the *crèches* are not self-supporting) are borne by the local rates, and the arrangements are under the direct supervision of the local Medical Board.

The convenience which this system affords to parents with either large or small families, the advantage in case of the mother's illness, and the confidence with which temporary absences from home can at all times be arranged, undisturbed by anxiety as to the well-being of the little ones left behind, are so manifest that it is with difficulty we can realise the almost total neglect, under the late régime, of what appears to us of the twentieth century an essential accessory to domestic comfort.

It is perhaps needless to remark that these arrangements were at the outset vigorously attacked, by persons of a certain order of mind, as putting a premium on parental neglect and on the shirking of family responsibilities; and by others, as tending to enhance the already perilous probability of a great increase of the numbers in families under Collectivism. The former objection may be dismissed without comment; but a certain amount of interest attaches to the complete falsification of the prophecies of excessive increase of population under the system of State Industrialism. More than one cause has contributed to the steady decrease in the average family aggregate which has been in progress since 1905. The education of women in our day upon a system identical with that of men has done much to modify the old readiness with which the nineteenth century wife consented to spend the best part of her life in merely imitating the fecundity of the rabbit; but it is probable that feminine jealousy has been a more active agent

in the change. As a result of the economic freedom of women, the motive of marrying merely for a maintenance has of course been much less in operation, and that of marrying for inclination correspondingly on the increase; while the Collectivist régime has extinguished the old opportunities of thrusting the care of children on to "servants" of an inferior social grade to the mistress and mother. This has necessarily limited the latter to the alternative of admitting into the family circle—on an equality with herself and her husband—a woman whose welcome may be assumed under the circumstances to be in an inverse ratio to her youth and attractiveness. The nett result of this state of things has undoubtedly been an increasing tendency on the part of the national motherhood to keep families within the numerical limits permitting of personal maternal care, and thus effectually to check the former habit of adding to the muster-roll of the nursery with such frequency as to make outside assistance imperative, if the children were to receive proper attention at all.

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A certain difficulty had been apprehended in connection with what may be called the private employment of citizens. But this never really arose. Clubs, societies, and institutions requiring staffs had only to seek employés at the Labour Bureau (of course on purely optional terms),* and on arranging to recoup the State the credit of 21s. per week per head had full liberty to secure (if they could) such assistance as they required. So with the Churches of all denominations in connection with their clergy and pastors, &c.; with municipal corporations, musical societies, athletic and yacht clubs, and in fact with every public and private association of an unobjectionable character. A little friction had been expected to occur in applying the principle of universal State service to the members of Roman Catholic monastic communities vowed

* *I.e.*, no citizen could be assigned to private employment in his own or any other occupation except by his consent.

to seclusion ; but this had been spontaneously avoided by the authorities of that Church undertaking that an ample equivalent in production (usually of garden produce) should be forthcoming for every member of such organisations.

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An interesting feature of the early years of the Co-operative Commonwealth was the erection of great numbers of picturesque buildings, in close proximity to the national country palaces, to serve as houses for invalids and convalescent, for aged or pensioned citizens, and for the infirm and incapacitated of all ages. These "palace houses," as they were called, usually took the form of extensive additions to the offices or rearward structures of the main building, as at Eaton, Chatsworth, and similar national palaces, or were built close at hand but screened by trees. It was universally felt that for the helpless, afflicted, sick, or injured of the community, for patients undergoing the long tedium of convalescence, and for aged people who had survived or become separated from their relatives, or were otherwise alone in the world, no care and consideration could be too profound or too tender ; and that what was lacking to them of those opportunities of happiness and enjoyment, which were open to the rest of the world, should at all events be made up as far as possible by a life spent amidst scenes of the greatest beauty that art and nature combined could furnish. All the great country seats, parks, and mansions of our territorial aristocracy were sooner or later put to this use, and thus came to possess a value and an interest never possible as long as they were merely the symbols of pride of wealth, rank, and class privilege. Country-houses and suburban mansions which were too small to be put on the footing of national palaces, and at the same time were too large to be rentable by private citizens, were usually turned into residential clubs, local town-halls, and gardens, or enlarged to form holiday hotels and boarding houses. Of these, the number was countless, and the change resulted in the habitual

enjoyment, by hundreds of thousands of the community, of architectural, garden, and woodland beauties which had hitherto been the jealously reserved appanages of a handful of plutocrats.

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Town life at the same time became more picturesque, artistic, natural, and enjoyable. Art and industrial exhibitions and competitions were periodically held in the smallest communities, and in the large centres these attractions drew crowds from all the surrounding districts. Choral societies multiplied beyond example,* and choral music in Great Britain attained an excellence and a universality unknown elsewhere, and indeed unprecedented at any time. Municipal architects came up to London to study the magnificent Halls of the Companies as models for provincial public buildings, and made notes of the houses in Bruges for their own thoroughfares. They went to the Paris boulevards to see what to avoid in the way of bald, meretricious, and monotonous street architecture, while they picked up ideas for open-air cafés and restaurants, and for the use of trees in town thoroughfares. The Philharmonic and St. George's Halls in Liverpool attracted architects from all parts to study what were respectively the finest music-room in England and the most perfect modern classical building in the world, while Claughton Park, Birkenhead (Paxton's *chef-d'œuvre*), provided an example for half the municipal landscape gardeners in the kingdom.

So much was now provided by the State of what had formerly been burdens assumed by separate localities, that almost nominal levies of taxation furnished provincial corporations with ample funds for parks, gardens, official buildings, town bands, and other aids to public recreation and enjoyment. Municipal development was immensely stimulated by

* In many churches of the large towns an oratorio was given every week-night during the winter season, and in this way the limitation of many City congregations to half-a-dozen people was gradually modified.

the removal of the old distinctions of occupation, the equalisation of income, and the futility of any pretence of superior wealth. Ostentation and parade in private life no longer served any social purpose, and were rapidly abandoned. The consequent inevitable diversion of magnificence and luxury into the channel of public accommodation, which accompanied step by step the growing simplicity and absence of display in the household, led to a revolution in the social habits of our population as complete as that which had been carried out in its industrial organisation.

The impersonal interests of the home circle became associated with more artistic dress, furniture, and domestic appointments, in place of the vulgarity of mere costliness. Fashion became daily less and less of a tyrant among women, and with men ceased to have any influence. No one having anything to gain by imitating or consulting other people in attire, style, habits, or fads, or to lose by indulging their own preferences therein, a diversity and individuality hitherto unknown and undreamed-of began to characterise the mass of the community. The dreary monotony of ideas, sameness of dress, conventionality of interest, and general tendency to ape somebody else, which had been such conspicuous vices of the old régime, gradually disappeared. Mrs. Grundy died and was buried, and every man's hobby reigned in her stead. Amongst the natural consequences of this new personal independence has been so rapid a development of originality in design, in the graphic and plastic arts, and in applied æsthetics, that the golden days of the old architecture, wood and metal work, costume, furniture, utensils, and ornamented construction generally, seem within a measurable distance of being restored to us.

One conspicuous result of the new régime was an unprecedented development of mechanical, chemical, and other inventions, completely falsifying the innumerable predictions to the

contrary which had been a stock resource of Individualists for a generation. The reasons for this were manifold. Thousands of born inventors (and by this term we mean those whose natural genius for invention broke out irrepressibly and wholly apart from a mere monetary stimulus, and was frequently exercised at great voluntary sacrifices), who were formerly utterly precluded from developing their ideas by lack of leisure alone, had now every opportunity of doing so; besides being unhampered by any necessity for steering clear of patents and other vested rights. Again, now that the fatal predominance in power and prestige of mere wealth was gone for ever, the inveterate and almost universal yearning after social distinction, which will last as long as human nature endures, could now only be arrived at in two ways. One of these must be the exhibition of superiority in either genius or ingenuity—such as art, literature, knowledge, research, mechanical dexterity and resource, or skill in useful invention; the other that of energy, ability, and success in the public service. The latter was of course open in a measure to the most mediocre and commonplace individual, the former only to those specially gifted by nature. But the balance was an obviously fair one; and now that every grade of citizen, scavenger and Prime Minister alike, enjoyed precisely the same rights, privileges, advantages, and income, it was a perfectly inevitable result that the *man*, as a man, became everything and the question of his money nothing. Hence the inventor who devised new methods to save labour and expense, or who introduced new advantages or conveniences, took rank at once as a distinguished personage when he could no longer be crushed by want of means, exploited by his employer, or ruined by attacks or piracies on his patent.

The simple fact was that the craving for prominence and influence, inherent in the great majority of human beings, which in former times led to the pursuit of wealth as by far the readiest means of obtaining that kind of prestige, was, under the new conditions, merely diverted into other channels.

Wealth being impossible, the ambitious man must be something other than wealthy, that was all. To secure wealth had formerly meant to be a curse to his species. If he could not now achieve prominence by being a blessing, he was at all events permitted to do very little harm.

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Civil jurisprudence was soon almost forgotten. With the registration of all contracts, the possibilities of litigation became reduced nearly to zero; and the transfer of all trade and commerce to the State extinguished the rest. Crimes against property were become so difficult or useless in the absence of currency and of a market for stolen goods in this country, that thieving was scarcely heard of. Stolen jewelry could of course be got abroad for sale, but the men ready to run the risks attendant upon this sort of enterprise had been mostly expatriated; and the theft of a brooch or necklace now usually represented the irresistible temptation presented by such an ornament to some domestic "help." The practical extinction of drunkenness, and the elimination of an enormous section of the brutal classes, caused crimes of violence to be exceedingly rare. Nine-tenths of all the judicial and penal machinery became obsolete and useless within half-a-dozen years of the Great Revolution.

Those provisions of the new Criminal Code which were aimed at the much-prophesied idleness of an emancipated proletariat were curiously little called into operation. It is true that there were in every occupation a considerable number who had always been incorrigible loafers, skulkers, and shirkers of any useful work whatever, whom not even the penalty of semi-starvation had ever been effective in coercing into industry. These could only be utilised in the industrial army by the periodical promise and performance of the "cat"; and indeed it was this class which mainly occupied the attentions of the judiciary until it was eliminated by death, penal servitude, or the pension arrangements.

But amongst the real proletariat the whole theory of industrial labour had been revolutionised by the new régime. The workman recognised that every man in the kingdom* stood upon the same footing as himself, in regard to the demand that he should earn his bread by work. The fixed credit had abolished all caste distinctions of occupation. The loafer was not now a "gentleman," but a "blacklister" for whom the gaol and a flogging were at hand. Above all, no employers were building upon his toil a fortune in which he was to have no share. He now worked first of all for the comforts, luxuries and privileges which he shared equally with every effective member of the community; and secondly for the State, in whose prosperity he had the most direct interest, whose service was the highest and only channel for distinction open to himself or anyone else, and whose business was not carried on as a method of enriching a few favoured individuals, but simply and solely for the benefit of himself and his fellows. More significant still was the change which had extinguished the old opportunities of enjoying infinite leisure by living on the industry of others, in favour of a system which made an increase of spare time the reward of an unpopular avocation; and which made "retirement" the privilege of every man at an age, which, even as temporarily fixed, left a fair future prospect of life to be passed free from work, and was likely to be further reduced as time went on.† The actual amount of work now demanded from each citizen was so moderate, the hours so reasonable, and the term of holiday so extended, that only a monomania for idleness could interfere with the full working of the industrial régime. Nothing of the sort was ever apparent.

On the contrary, the whole *esprit de corps* of the proletariat —now largely leavened by well-educated volunteers from

* Except a handful of temporary compensatees, who were very little before the public at this juncture.

† The ages for retirement into the ranks of "pensionaries" were first reduced to 55 for men and 45 for women in 1910. The present ages of 50 for men and 40 for women date from 1925, and will probably remain unchanged.

amongst the distributing class—ran heartily and cheerfully in the direction of the proverbial "fair day's work for a fair day's wage." As year by year its ranks were recruited by the cadets of the new Commonwealth, taught at school the full duties of a Collectivist citizen, the very question of shirking work became obsolete, and the bugbear of a nation of loafers was forgotten.

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As to the effect of the new régime on the *morale* of the nation, little need here be said. The promoters of the great industrial revolution had wholly excluded questions of moral regeneration or personal ethics from their calculations, and had neither looked for any improvement in human nature as a preliminary to the adoption of the system, nor expected anything of the sort to follow as a necessary sequence of its success. They had neither called upon people to be unselfish nor expected them to become chaste; they had not aimed directly at diminishing drunkenness or making the community decently honest. State Industrialism was a pure question of social economy, the ideal of common sense applied to the business transactions of the nation, the substitution of a very simple organisation for a chaos of complexity, stupidity, inefficiency, and utterly hopeless failure to meet even the most elementary requirements of a civilised community.

Nevertheless it is interesting to observe how the introduction of a scientifically correct administration of the national affairs achieved, without any direct effort at all, almost everything that had been sought to be effected by centuries of ethical and religious propaganda, and sought in vain.

Human nature remained precisely the same; mankind were characterised by just the same instincts as before; and no miracle of regeneration had transformed the public into saints. But the practical results of Collectivism were almost equally convenient. It being useless to steal, honesty was practically universal. Men were obliged to be outwardly moral, because

the machinery for indulging their vices had disappeared. Having other means of amusing itself, the community no longer got drunk. As there was no occasion to be servile, people became self-respecting and independent. No one being any man's servant, bullying, hectoring, and petty tyranny were too dangerous to be practised. Men were not yet brothers; but they were all members of some Trade-Union or other, which answered equally well as regards protecting the rights of the individual. Bribery of any kind being difficult or nearly impossible, public officials were little, if at all, corrupt. As noisy professions of personal piety no longer served any trade purposes, the so-called "religious world" became as free from glaring hypocrisy as could reasonably be expected. The unscrupulous cunning, the misrepresentation, and the grasping avarice formerly so essential to success in business being now perfectly useless, the curious vulture-like expression so revoltingly characteristic of the genuine City man of past days was gradually wearing off. The speech of hundreds of thousands of men, whose commercial life had been one continued round of falsity and equivocation, was insensibly becoming almost truthful by lapse of time and lack of occasion for practising their former accomplishments.

It is true that these improvements in morals were rather perfunctory, but as far as they went they *were* improvements. The younger generation has to this extent benefited by the new régime, that whereas their progenitors became more or less virtuous through the withdrawal of most of their opportunities of being vicious, the youth of our day has grown up in almost complete ignorance of the rascalities, the vilenesses, and the devilries which were part of the very atmosphere of his daily life to the average citizen before 1905.

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The improvement in general manners so characteristic of the present era began to be apparent almost immediately on the introduction of the industrial change. This was partly

because the extreme representatives of coarseness and blackguardism had left their country for their country's good, and partly because innumerable new sources of interest were opened out to the uncultured and uneducated. As a result, there was a notable diminution of the delight in horseplay, buffoonery, and mere noise, natural to a class which had no alternative amusement or resource except that of excessive drinking. Another reason was that the really vulgar were an infinitesimal fraction of the community, and they soon fell more or less into the habits of the classes with whom they were now thrown into intimate and frequent contact. With the advent of perfect freedom and equality of privilege, with the extinction of what was virtually serfdom and its accompanying tyranny, injustice, cruelty, and meanness, it was now possible for every citizen outside a lunatic asylum to respect himself as every man's equal—and with respect for himself came that respect for others which involves self-restraint, consideration, sympathy, and personal courtesy.

It is true that this growth of general independence was not acceptable in all quarters, and it unfortunately happened that the least sympathy with the reign of State Industrialism was evinced by those women of the middle and upper classes who had never known the anxieties of breadwinning. These persons found swept away, by a stroke of the pen, the whole grade of society upon which they had relied to breed submissive, silent, and almost automatic domestic slaves, who would listen to nagging, faultfinding, and insolence, without a murmur, get up or go to bed at any hours however unreasonable, accept confinement to the house for days or weeks at a time as a matter of course, forego society, exercise in the open air, amusement, reading, or intelligent interests of every description, and above all things "keep their place and know their station." This was gall and wormwood to the British matron generally, and the "upper circles" in particular. Another outrage was the extinction of "shopping," together with the disappearance of the innumerable shopwindows of former

times, the conversion of the State Stores into places of business instead of lounges for the idle and vacuously minded, and the indisposition of the State employés to fatigue themselves merely to afford a handful of silly women the luxury of inspecting a host of things they never intended to purchase, by way of killing time. These last were probably the greatest of all the grievances of the fair sex; and the régime of Collectivism came to be regarded, by the bulk of the formerly idle women of this country, with a bitterness of resentment which endured almost to the present generation, and which formed for years an unwelcome blot on the picture of general peace, happiness, comfort, and dignified independence presented by the Co-operative Commonwealth called into being by the Revolution of 1905.

Amongst those who cultivated an abiding dissatisfaction with the new order of things, the candid historian cannot omit to include those fairly numerous members of the exploiter class who continued to vociferate in chorus that the Phalanx had "destroyed all ambition," and had "made life too dull and uninteresting" to be worth living.

It may perhaps be admitted that, as far as these gentlemen themselves were concerned, there was a large amount of justice in their complaint. This arose of course from the fact that their own "ambition" had never meant anything more than a vehement desire and determination to utilise their special endowments or opportunities in getting the better of their fellow-citizens, either in professional, commercial, social, or political life—an "ambition" which Collectivism was expressly designed to make impossible.

These "ambitious" ones were, *ipso facto*, almost wholly destitute of personal resources which could promote the enjoyment of leisure, either by themselves or other people. They had become accustomed to find the salt of life entirely in the brigandage, gambling, swindling, over-reaching, bullying, sweating, intriguing and wire-pulling which constituted the chief elements of the deceased game of exploitation; and

they were now, in consequence, somewhat drearily situated. Science, art, literature, music, athletics, mechanics, floriculture, and all the innumerable hobbies which claimed the leisure of the more happily constituted members of the community, were simply sealed books to the persons of whom we speak. It was thus natural that they should find Collectivism very "dull" indeed. To those of their number who were unable or unwilling to adopt the distraction of the habit of drinking, and who felt a delicacy or difficulty in aiming at prominence in the so-called "religious world" (the two favourite resources of the crass "Philistine" under Individualism), the new régime had obviously nothing to offer. That it should present itself to what they were pleased to call their minds as a conspicuous failure was, under the circumstances, quite unavoidable.

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The effect of the Revolution on the minds and physique of many sections of the wage-earning class was necessarily profound and widespread. Among the poorest ranks especially, the conditions of completely changed air, diet, and mode of life, the cessation of grinding toil and continuous anxiety, together with the peace, comfort, and unlimited resources for pleasure, brought almost instantly to the doors of the class hitherto rarely separated by more than a week from death by starvation, produced results almost magical. The hapless victims of the vile system of property and profit-mongering became new beings. Features haggard, worn, and aged before their prime became young again. The feeble, the sick, and the dying gathered new life and strength. The hopeless and despairing took heart of grace once more; and from the faces of the piteous hosts of sweated and harried women and children of our great cities the awful hunted expression, which was a sign-manual of the desperate and never-ending struggle for the barest necessaries of food, shelter and clothing, began slowly to pass away.

The removal of the hideous incubus of want and misery amongst so many millions of the nation operated gradually, but nevertheless surely, to permit of the dawning of an intelligent interest in something beyond the mere animal existence whose conditions had hitherto absorbed all their hopes and fears. Life began to reveal possibilities of enjoyment of which they had never even dreamed. For the first time to many of them, the eye had leisure and opportunity to rest on something that was not pitiful or revolting, the ear to open to sounds other than those of human suffering or degradation. Music, art, books, and the beauties of nature called to them with voices which, however faint and distant, were not unheard or unheeded; and the response which had been ever and anon so pathetically shown to be possible, even from the darkest depths of the old régime, grew daily wider and deeper as the years of the new era rolled on.

Nor were those on the lowest rung of the social ladder the only ones to breathe a new air under the changed sky of the Great Revolution. From unnumbered breadwinners the fetters of an almost intolerable bondage fell away at once and for ever; and the slaves "with black coats," who had not enjoyed even the miserable confidence that their slavery would be perpetual, saw themselves at last not only free but safe in their freedom. Thousands upon thousands of middle-class employés awoke to find the nightmare of ever-pressing anxiety a thing of the past. Their families and their own old age were provided for amply and securely; and no caprice of an employer, reverse of fortune, or crisis in trade, could jeopardise their daily bread again.

The feverish restlessness, the everlasting hurry, the undefined terror of what the morrow might bring forth, the fearful pressure of the business and professional life of the old days—all these had ceased for ever. The savage struggle for existence was over, the slavery of immemorial ages ended. The shadow of an infinite curse was lifted from the souls of men; and a great peace fell upon all the land.

L'ENVOI.

With this cursory glance at some of its more immediate and superficial results, our record of the inauguration of the Co-operative Commonwealth must come to a close.

What may be the ultimate outcome of Collectivism (or, as it was more commonly termed in the nineteenth century, STATE SOCIALISM) it is impossible to foretell. But the recent adoption of the new régime by our neighbours over "the silver streak," and by our English-speaking brothers across the Atlantic, seems to promise that the day is not far distant when in no "civilised" country shall a man see his wife and children dying for lack of food, and know that he cannot earn for them even a crust of bread; or a woman be forced to choose between starvation, suicide, or selling herself upon the public streets.

To hasten the dawning of that day, a multitude that no man can number have given their means, their labour, and their lives. They have fought as heroes, died as martyrs, and for reward have been reviled as worse than murderers by those they strove to enlighten and set free. It is to further their great work of redemption, and to aid in the completion of what may remain unaccomplished of their task, that we have told in the foregoing pages THE STORY OF THE PHALANX.

THE END.

Printed by GEORGE STANDRING, 7 & 9 Finsbury Street, London, E.C.